

Ancient Russians & The Peoples of the Great Steppe



Lev Gumilev

BERSERKER
BOOKS



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FOREWORD

In this work, L. N. Gumilëv [Gumilòff] presents the reader (as ever) with an attempt to reconstruct the history of Russia from the 9th to the 14th centuries, written in a captivating style. Given that much remains hidden due to the imaginary educational system, this work in your hands is truly a reconstruction of history. Since there has never been such an attempt in the past that everyone could trust, this reconstruction has every right to exist. Had he relied solely on the meagre sources illuminating that period, something entirely reliable might have been produced, but in any case, a guarantee of fully understanding history could not be provided. For historical experience is, of course, far richer than what is written based solely on sources. In any case, it is impossible to reach the most reliable conclusion by relying solely on historical sources without elements of reconstruction. L. N. Gumilëv possesses more elements of reconstruction than other historians eager to draw conclusions of the ‘touching the water with the tip of a stick’ variety. Moreover, Gumilëv possesses the very capabilities that those other historians lack. For he possesses not only a didactic imagination but also the power of conception.

I do not wish to enter into a debate with L. N. Gumilev on certain matters. For his views as a whole contain elements that are acceptable. Gumilev is drawing a broad map. As for selecting any particular point on this map as a target, that is entirely up to him.

A similar reconstruction map of the religious and political life of Kievan Rus’ had been drawn up by historians such as M. D. Prisélkoff, down to the finest detail. Prisélkoff’s work has not lost its value to this day. Whilst L. N. Gumilëv’s work bears a resemblance to Prisélkoff’s method in terms of the approach to reconstructing Russian national life, there is certainly no

identity between the lines of inquiry. I am fully convinced that the religious-national life trajectory outlined by Gumilëv will not arouse any less interest than that evoked by Prisélkoff's line of inquiry.

You may read this work by Gumilëv as if it were a novel. The author has every right to write such a 'novel', but in this work he is, at present, the foremost expert on the subject under consideration. His conception not only aligns with existing views on the bilateral relations between Russia and the Steppe, but by laying bare the full complexity of the situation, he has effectively had the final say on the matter. Of course, one could debate certain of Gumilëv's views, but is it worth it? One must acknowledge Gumilëv's ability to articulate his own views concisely (and at times, very concisely). Gumilëv's conception also touches upon a very important issue and helps to mitigate the antagonism between Russia and the peoples of the East that has preoccupied us until now. This subject, as one can sense in every line of the book, has been treated with great care. In my view, Gumilëv's conception is entirely consistent with the fundamental view on the 'friendship of peoples'.

At first glance, the work in your hands may appear to have been written without regard for sound methodology or compositional techniques in terms of the presentation of the subject matter, the selection of sources and literature, and the manner of exposition and drawing of conclusions. However, this is merely a first impression. Upon closer consideration, it will become clear that all these elements are indeed present and are presented in a far from banal manner.

In the opening chapters, the author sets out his own views on cultural history and ethnic history, and even on the methodology of utilising sources. The author is certainly right in arguing that it is not possible to construct a broad historical panorama based solely on sources, whilst disregarding all forms of literary criticism and generalised studies. Nevertheless, it must be noted that not only certain historical issues but also the cultural history of a dark period such as the first millennium AD have not yet been fully illuminated. Consequently, proceeding from the premise that the author, like his predecessors, has the right to rely on the method of generalisation, we have no right to demand that his approach be subjected to sufficient criticism, or that every point of a thesis—whether accepted or rejected—be substantiated.

In the second chapter, rather than a review of sources, we find the author's own views on cultural history and ethnogenesis. This chapter is a philosophical

*Beginning with a general overview, the text then moves on to historical and geographical observations and ethnological concepts, and only then does the author explain 'what should be discarded'. It is evident that the bibliography concerning the Khazaria issue has been critically reviewed in M. I. Artamonoff's work **History of the Khazars**, edited by Gumilev himself. The Eurasian steppe had been addressed in the author's earlier "Steppe Trilogy"¹; the data concerning Old Russia, however, has been drawn from my own commentary on the "Chronicle of Nestor". Indeed, the conclusion drawn by the research demonstrates the futility of repeating a work, except in cases where it contradicts generally accepted, outdated, yet uncritically adopted views.*

The author bases his conclusion not only on the analysis of fragmentary relics from those periods that have survived to the present day, but also on systematic relationships where the history of events plays an indicative role amidst the intensity of historical processes.

As the scope of such a synthesis—applicable to the history of warfare, ethnogenesis and cultural history—was not previously known, it had not been applied before. L. N. Gumilev, by virtue of acting as a bridge between these disciplines, has identified the phenomenon of 'passionerlik'—a concept he himself discovered—which enables the application of historical synthesis.

L. N. Gumilëv, not content with what he had achieved, embarked on an analysis of cultural history through the lens of physical geography. Having correctly identified the relationship between the laws of natural economy and the prosperity—and even the military capabilities—of ancient societies, the author also compares the historical events of the Eurasian steppe region with climatic changes. Through this method, the author has obtained precise data that enables him to provide a comprehensive description of the historical-geographical backdrop against which various cultural influences clashed with the original indigenous cultural patterns of Eastern Europe. Although this work cannot be regarded as the final word on the subject, the 'blank spot' in the history of our homeland has now been filled.

Almost all of the author's arguments in the historical sections come as a surprise to the reader. China, which appears to be a peace-loving country that has been provoked by nomadic peoples, emerges as a predatory aggressor—a fact that has been demonstrated in a surprising manner against a broad historical backdrop. The Obir [Avar] people, a remnant of Turan culture—

1 The works titled "The Huns, the Ancient Turks and in the Footsteps of the Imaginary Kingdom" published by Selenge Publications. (trans.)

is illustrated. The Polovtsians [Kipchaks] and the Steppe of the Kipchaks are described in detail. Byzantium, however, is not, in the author's view, the 'Second Rome', but rather an 'anti-Rome'. L. N. Gumilev, drawing on the works of the chronicler Nestor, A. A. Shakhmatov and the author of these lines, characterises it as unreliable. Svyatoslav's campaign is presented not as a raiding expedition by a Slavic Viking, but rather as a war of independence waged against a merchant class [the Jews] that exploited the subjugated peoples.

All of this is unusual; but the internal logic of the narratives and the extensive analyses are even more surprising.

In his concluding chapters, L. N. Gumilëv examines the reasons behind the disappearance of a significant portion of artistic and cultural heritage. According to the author, the poor preservation of these works is not solely due to the use of materials—whether high-quality or otherwise—that were constantly exposed to the corrosive effects of silicates; the iconoclastic tendencies of certain sects, or rather ideological movements such as the Cathars, Bogomils and Ismailis, also played a role.

The final chapters are particularly well-written.

The author sees in *Life* the power that resists the ruthlessness of Time, and which gives rise to the desire and enthusiasm for action. And, in his view, *Life* is a phenomenon unique to this world. I should also mention that all of Gumilëv's previously published works have found a wide readership and have been taken beyond borders. I have witnessed the interest shown in L. N. Gumilëv's works in Hungary, Poland, as well as in France, England and the USA.

This work makes a significant contribution not only to the homeland, but also to the development of history. Between you and me, the content of the work extends far beyond the framework in which history is traditionally perceived as a scientific discipline. L.

This book by N. Gumilëv is, without a doubt, a significant event in our cultural life.

Ord. Prof. D. S. Lihac̣yeff

THE TRANSLATOR'S FOREWORD

Apart from a certain number of specialists and a few enthusiasts, those in Turkey who possess in-depth knowledge of Russia, the Russians, Old Russia and the Old Russians are few and far between.

Compared to the superficial knowledge an ordinary reader might have of Arab history, the Umayyads, the Abbasids and the peoples of Europe, I suspect their knowledge of the Russians is virtually non-existent. A reader from nationalist circles would likely answer the question “Who are the Russians?” with: “Our mortal enemies; the Muscovite infidels who oppress our Turkic brothers in Central Asia, seize their lands, and have waged war against us time and again”; whilst a left-wing individual’s response would undoubtedly be: “The pioneers of scientific socialism; the defenders of oppressed peoples; the standard-bearers of the anti-imperialist struggle.” These views are partly correct, and even then, they apply only to the 18th to 20th centuries. Indeed, some will even recount strange tales, such as how Catherine the Great of Russia, during the Battle of Prut, visited the tent of Baltacı Mehmet Pasha and, supposedly by using her feminine wiles, saved his army and the future of Russia. Such stories, which bear no relation to historical facts, were, unfortunately, even included in school textbooks published by the Ministry of National Education at one time. Indeed, the novels written on this subject and the stories adapted for the silver screen are the fruits of a ignorance that is both laughable and, to the same extent, tragic. Conscious Turkish nationalism has no harmful or dangerous aspect; indeed, it is essential and beneficial. However, a bigoted nationalism founded on ignorance cannot even tolerate seeing, hearing or reading historical truths; and which, driven by the natural impulse arising from the desire to always perceive its own people and army as the greatest, the most superior and invincible, distorts reality and internalises these distortions as if they were the truth—is doomed to turn into a bitter pain when confronted with reality.

Strange as it may seem, apart from a few minor studies published in Turkey in recent years on 19th-

20th centuries, the only academic work that devotes any space to the history of Old Russia and the Old Russians is Prof. Dr. Akdes Nimet Kurat's book **History of Russia**, published by the Turkish Historical Society (TTK). Even the information it provides on the ancient Russians is both limited and incomplete, and is partly riddled with errors.

When the reader peruses this two-volume work by L. N. Gumilev, they will gain a far clearer understanding of the extent to which Turkic blood has intermingled with Russian blood; indeed, they will realise that Napoleon's remark, 'Dig a few generations back into any Russian, and you will find a Tatar [Turk]!', essentially points to a historical truth. The truth is that the Turks' relations with the Russian peoples began as far back as the Huns' era, continued during the Göktürk period; after the 10th century, they persisted with the Pechenegs, Bulgars, Guz, Berendi [Baranî], Kara Kalpak, and especially the Kipchaks; but unfortunately, from the 12th century onwards, with the exception of a certain period during the Mongol and Ottoman eras, this relationship has invariably developed to the detriment of the Turkic peoples, and hundreds of thousands, indeed millions, of Turks have been assimilated into Slavic culture and converted to Christianity, thereby losing their religion, language, nationality, and customs and traditions. Today, apart from a small group of Gagauz Turks who remain within the Slavic world and have preserved, if not their religion, at least their Turkish identity, all others have been assimilated and lost.

One might ask: 'If our blood is so thoroughly mixed with that of the Russians, why have we spent so much of history spilling each other's blood?' It is a valid question, but if we consider the fact that wars have always broken out between neighbours, it becomes clear that this is by no means an anomaly. People, too, do not quarrel with someone ten streets away, but with their next-door neighbours. Wars, too, occur at points of ethnic contact.

Throughout history, peoples do not readily become enemies of one another. On the contrary, it is the leaders at their helm—and sometimes economic and political interests—that turn them into friends or foes. Yet even these latter factors stem from the personal decisions of those leaders. We paid the price for the wars waged against the Russians in the past, in an attempt to curry favour with the West, and for the animosity harboured towards the Russian people, by severing our ties with the Balkans, North Africa and the Middle East, and by cutting off our connections with Central Asia for years and being isolated. We brought down a vast empire. But in the end, neither the mosque

nor a church! Yet we could have been friends with the Russians. Perhaps then the course of history would have been different.

One of the most significant aspects of the book, particularly the first volume, is that it presents, in the form of striking facts, matters concerning Jewish history about which we know very little or nothing at all. You will see, through striking examples, how the Jews turned the Khazar Turkic khans into puppets, how they treated the local population like slaves, and how they did the same to the Russians; ultimately, it was the wretched subjects of a collapsed khanate who paid the price for their greed and avarice. You will read with dismay how the Jews, who suck the blood of every society they find themselves in like leeches and ultimately lead to their ruin, were also the greatest slave traders of that era, purchasing Christian captives solely for the pleasure of killing them, and slaughtering them by leaving them to starve and die of thirst.

L. N. You will read with interest how Gumilev defended the peoples of the Steppe against many prejudiced Russian historians; essentially, as the author states in another work, 'All forms of prejudice are harmful', you will see how these historians, who are, so to speak, ignorant of historical facts, attempted to distort history with their fixed ideas.

For explanations of ethnogenesis and ethnology terms such as 'passioner, passionerlik, akmatik phase, breaking phase, near deviation, far deviation, inertia phase...' mentioned in the work, one may refer to the author's book *A Thousand Years Around the Caspian*. We should also note here that the author uses the terms "Rus and Ross" for the Russians, and likewise "Russia and Rossya", to distinguish between the old and new Russians and Russia. [-L.N.] The author, [.] these explanations are ours.

We are confident that you will learn a great deal from this work, which we believe will fill a significant gap in the field.*

D. Ahsen Batur

* Note: The bibliography will be provided at the end of Volume II.

IDENTIFICATION OF THE PROBLEM ()

Thesis

The principle of ethnogenesis—the dissipation of the impulse arising from entropy¹ and/or the expenditure of passionate energy to resist the surrounding ethnic and natural environment—is not limited to specific historical and geographical conflicts. Of course, if ethnic groups and, furthermore, their composite constructs—the super-ethnic groups—live within their own ecological niches, that is, within the landscapes surrounding them, the curve of ethnogenesis fully reflects their evolution. However, if large-scale migrations have occurred as a result of sociological, economic, political and ideological phenomena, and even the differing passionate tensions of the ethnic groups involved in such events, then a specific problem arises—such as the separation of ethnic groups from one another or their direct mixing (orthogenic lines)—which invariably leads to unexpected outcomes; more precisely, unpleasant, and sometimes tragic consequences.

During such conflicts, if the ethnos is not wiped out of history, the process begins anew; however, external influences always inflict wounds upon the ethnos and often result in irreparable losses. Interactions at the super-ethnic level lead to the erosion of principles. These must be viewed as the inevitable zigzags inherent in the process of ethnogenesis. For no one can live in isolation; relations between neighbours, however, develop in various ways.

The problem arising from the mutual influence of two systems can be resolved through the ‘us and our enemies’ contrast; but if the problem involves three or more systems, finding a solution becomes more difficult. Indeed, in 9th–11th-century Eastern Europe, three ethno-

1 Gumilev, L. N. *Ethnogenesis and the Earth's Biosphere*. L., 1989. Hereafter: Gumilev, *Ethnogenesis*.

cultural traditions clashed with one another, and the zigzag of history could only be halted in the 12th century; cultural development then began in a phase of passionate regression—a dormant stage of ethnogenesis. This is the sole variant of ethnic history that captures our attention amidst various perspectives. These perspectives will be examined in detail.

Darwin and Lamarck's theory of evolution was proposed to explain the formation of species. Ethnogenesis, however, is an intra-species process and is specific. Consequently, the application of evolutionary principles to ethnic phenomena is, by definition, anomalous.

Ethnic processes are discontinuous. Persistent entities—those that do not prolong their own existence but halt it, much as Faust did for a brief moment—are exceptions to this rule. In other words, for a dynamic ethnos, the resolution of such an 'immortality' problem amounts to the subversion of an established order.

A surviving ethnic group—provided it is not completely isolated—may choose one of the following three paths: 1) To await its elimination by its neighbours (elimination); 2) To join the ranks of a dominant super-ethnos during a phase of transition and remain hidden within that entity (incorporation); 3) To scatter here and there (dispersion). It is possible to observe all three of these variants within a single century, the 12th century. For this century marked an interlude between the fragmentation of the Islamic world, the revival of Byzantium, and the childish recklessness displayed by Christian Europe through the so-called 'Crusades'. Here, the variant concerning relations between Russia and the Steppe can also be easily traced. The most prominent historians of the 18th and 19th centuries engaged with this subject. What remains to be done is to familiarise oneself with their writings. But, of course, from the perspective of ethnology. For this new science has proven just how unique it is. The central thesis of ethnology is dialectical: a new ethnos is young and creative; it emerges suddenly by shattering the framework of the old culture. It is devoid of spirituality. Whilst expending its energy on creativity, it lives as if it were an ordinary, ageing ethnos living through a period of stagnation or ignorance. Amidst storms and gales, it retains the right to find a place for itself under the sun. Amidst blood and dust, it discovers its own ideal of beauty and wisdom. Then, as he grows old, he gathers the remnants of an unspoiled past for himself. This is called the Renaissance, or more accurately, 'degeneration'. If withered ethnic groups are not stirred into action by a new impulse, the

the fate that awaits them is to become a remnant. However, even if irregular, if these impulses are renewed, humanity continues to exist within its diverse formations. It is on this subject that we shall converse with the reader.

The history of Ancient Rus, which chroniclers note only emerged as a distinct entity in the 9th century, is of interest to both the author and, presumably, the reader. But what existed up until then? Who were the people surrounding this newly formed ethnic system? Who were its friends and enemies? Whilst the sources mention the Khazars, the Varangians, and even the Western Slavs, the Turks and the Mongols, why is there no mention of it anywhere? Many events are recounted in the books, including those from sources that are not particularly reliable. These events are the information contained in the chronological tables that follow. However, the relationships between these events require further critical analysis and the identification of a reference point.

I believe the most suitable point from which to gain a broad perspective is the lower reaches of the Volga. The current problem leads us to the following question: why did Kievan Rus', having weathered so many storms, not perish, but instead emerge victorious, leaving behind a luxurious art and magnificent literature for its descendants before fading away? It is worth striving to find the answer to this question. However, we must not forget that if the target is large, it is easier to hit it than a small one. For this reason, we shall also address the subject by extending it to a vast region between Western Europe and China. For only such an exploration can assist in resolving the problem.

The Oykümena of Khazaria and the ‘ ’ up to the Year 800

To assess the context in which the process under examination began, let us start with a brief recap. The most readily acceptable approach is to consider the ethnic groups at the super-ethnic level, taking into account the developmental stages of unaltered ethnogenesis. Setting aside the numerous remnants, including the Khazars, the oldest were the nomadic descendants of the Huns and Sarmatians in the Great Steppe, whose ethnic systems had formed in the 3rd century BC. By the year 800, they held three khanates: the Uighur in the eastern steppes, the Avars in the west, and the Khazar Khanate in the Volga region and the North Caucasus. These—

2 The earliest date is 859. See **Povest' vremennix let** (hereafter: **PVL**). Moscow; Leningrad, 1950.

Of these, only the last was ruled by the Khans of the Ačina dynasty; the others entered a phase of obscurity, having replaced the original steppe culture with borrowed worldviews. Both khanates, despite appearing magnificent from the outside, were on the brink of extinction.

The impetus of the 1st century led, by the mid-2nd century, to the birth of Byzantium, the Great Migrations, and the emergence of the Slavic union. These three phenomena stood on the eve of the breaking point in the 9th century and on the threshold of the inertia phase of ethnogenesis. Byzantium shouldered the burden of cultural development; Slavic culture was preoccupied with expanding its sphere of influence; whilst the Frankish Empire, founded by Charlemagne in 800, was exposed to the threat of an inevitable fate, and consequently, just like neighbouring Scandinavia and Austria, the incubation period for a new passionate fragmentation began within its very core. In the subsequent 9th and 10th centuries, the iron cage of the Carolingian Empire shattered, giving rise to a feudal-papal Europe that proudly, yet exclusively, styled itself the 'Christian World'.

The most active were the super-ethnic groups that emerged over a period of approximately 500 years along a belt stretching from Arabia to Japan. These included the Caliphate of Baghdad, from which the Umayyads of Al-Andalus originated, Rajput India, Tibet—composed of small Bot tribes claiming authority over Central Asia, the Tang Empire, which had fragmented due to external failures and internal turmoil, and Japan, which was striving to implement reforms rapidly, paying a very heavy price for them.

These super-ethnic groups were in the dynamic phase of ethnogenesis. Passivity had fragmented them, severed their cultural traditions, disrupted their established order and, finally, by dismantling their social and political institutions, transformed them into destructive sectarian activities, like steppe fires. Yet all this was still merely a perspective. For in the year 800, the Abbasids, the Tibetan Empire and the Tang Empire possessed a structure perceived by their contemporaries as being destined to endure forever. This recent deviation applies to the bourgeoisie of today, who accept the world as eternal.

Despite their varying ages, intervening landscapes, cultural forms and

political structures of feudalism, there was no common ground whatsoever between all the aforementioned ethnic groups and even the remnants. All of them had emerged as a result of passionate upheavals in specific geographical regions where their ancestors had long since formed the ethnic substrate. Consequently, their migrations amounted to a movement towards similar landscapes that offered conditions conducive to maintaining their customary, traditional economies. Certain Germanic ethnic groups, such as the Goths, Vandals, Rugians and Lombards, formed an exception. They too ceased to exist as distinct ethnic systems; however, their descendants intermingled with the indigenous peoples of Spain, Italy and Provence. The Frankish and Anglo-Saxon ethnic groups, scattered across the landscapes to which they were accustomed, managed to survive.

Thanks to this law of geography, the role of ethnic chimeras was virtually negligible in the first millennium AD. For although chimeras did emerge in limited regions—as in China during the 4th and 5th centuries, for example—they were neither well-established nor long-lasting. Yet, quite rightly, there were exceptions to this rule. An ethnos that takes control of the anthropogenic landscape alongside the indigenous population is no longer dependent on environmental conditions and gains the opportunity to spread across a wide area. The entire oikoumene becomes the environment for this ethnos. Its interactions with the indigenous population, however, are not symbiotic but rather of a chimera-like nature. Let us examine how these systems emerged within the borders adjacent to the Caspian Sea, and what benefits they brought to both the indigenous people and the migrants. For this perspective will ensure that the current problems are resolved in a definitive and satisfactory manner.

The fact is, however, that the cultural history of the Eastern European region dating back to the first millennium AD has been scarcely studied. Traces have been lost; yet this allows us to identify the problem as being that the cultural sphere has always had a centre, much like a capital city holding sway. Old Russia had seized power in the Khazar Khaganate by the 10th century. Consequently, sovereignty belonged to the Khazars until the 10th century; however, the history of Old Russia predates that of Khazaria. Nevertheless, Khazar history has two dimensions: one indigenous and the other a global history brought by Jews who migrated from the Near East. Without taking the factor of international trade into account, not only Khazar history but even world history cannot be understood.

The conclusions we have reached are based on chronicle versions

3 See L. N. Gumilëv, *The Huns*. (Selenge Publications).

, it is essential to explain to the reader why the author has the right not to trust these sources. Why ethnic history differs from socio-political and cultural-ideological histories will become clear from the following paragraphs and the explanations provided.

What shall we look for, and how shall we look for it ?

The problem we have raised is contemporary, perspective-based and rather complex. On the one hand, the influences of the super-ethnic groups in Eastern Europe are intertwined. These super-ethnic groups comprise the Eurasian Turks, the heirs of the Great Turkic Khaganate, the Byzantine Empire, the Islamic world of the Caliphate era, and the 'Christian World' that overlaps with the super-ethnic unity. The remnants of the Great Migrations in Asia, such as the invincible Ugrians and the warrior Cumans (a branch of the Tingling), have also played no less a role. However, Old Russia, whose borders merge with the Great Steppe, takes first place. To grasp and describe the nature of the relationships between these ethnic groups in the same region and during the same period is to resolve the issue of ethnic contact through empirical generalisation.

On the other hand, although the history of the Khazars has been written about many times, it remains obscure due to sources being authored in different languages. Bringing together versions that do not contradict one another is, however, quite difficult. The same can be said regarding archaeological findings, including those uncovered by the author of these lines. Without additional data, these cannot shed light on the matter.

Furthermore, there is no consensus on what ethnic contact signifies for cultural history. Some argue that all forms of contact and intermingling are a blessing; others describe it as a disaster; a third group, however, holds the view that the intermingling of peoples has no effect whatsoever on their destinies. But, most importantly, none of them have been able to produce sufficient reasonable evidence to substantiate their claims.

We put forward a fourth view: Gas, wine and people—

4 See L. N. Gumilëv, *Drevniye Türki* (The Ancient Turks) (Selenge Publications). Hereafter: Gumilëv, *The Ancient Turks*.

Take whatever you like from them and mix them together. None will be exactly like the original components. But the results of the intermingling of ethnic groups are always different. Because they depend on different circumstances: 1. The way in which a particular ethnic group is influenced by the geographical environment surrounding it. Because the economic forms sometimes called symbiosis and sometimes competition depend on this influence. 2. The relationship between the stages of ethnogenesis of both components. These stages may or may not occur simultaneously. If they do not occur simultaneously, then the more dominant ethnic group, based solely on the personal desires of its leaders and even, at times, on its own internal impulses, will restrict the independence of the neighbouring ethnic group. 3. The ‘compliment’ (complement) arising from the interplay of cultural-psychological dominants, which may be positive or negative. The nature of these complements manifests itself in the population at large as either boundless sympathy or antipathy. 4. The perspective of contact. For this can sometimes lead to the assimilation of one ethnos by another, and at other times to its elimination. In short, the elimination of one ethnic group by another sometimes leads to the fusion of the two into a third identity, which signifies the birth of a new ethnic group.

Ultimately, resolving the current problem requires drawing not only on geography but also on history; in other words, it necessitates examining events through the lens of cause-and-effect relationships that appear optimal in the current context. Capturing this dimension is also essential.

Only as Much as Necessary

They say you cannot explain everything you know in a single book, and that is true. Nor is this necessary for the reader who is not swayed by the notion that the author knows a great deal, but who simply wishes to acquire the necessary information on a subject they wish to research.

In other words, the author must make sacrifices, but the aim is not to write the bibliography and history of the subject, as the Germans do (in the words of N.V. Timofeyeff-Resovski). In fact, the bibliography on the Khazars compiled by the Slavic History Department of the New York Public Library was published in the “Bulletin of the New York Public Library”. 42 (N.Y., 1938, pp. 695–710), and subsequently in Moravcsik’s book (Mo-

5 Artamonov, *Xazar*, p. 7.

ravcsik G. *Byzantinoturcica*, I. Berlin, 1958).⁵ So, why repeat a study that has already been done? What is the point?

It is generally assumed that the answer to a question that intrigues the reader must be found in historical sources and scholarly works. But the answer is not there! Nor is the answer to be found in the famous collections; yet it exists somewhere amongst them, and the sought-after answer can be found through a broad comparison of documents and events. Consequently, the history we require lies not in the sources themselves, but perhaps in events not recorded on their pages. Since such events are quite numerous, what we are discussing is indeed possible. I believe the matter is simple. The political history of Khazaria is brief—spanning the years 650–955—and took place within a limited region, closely intertwined with its subsequent neighbours. The literature on the subject is indeed rich, but unfortunately, since the publication of M.I. Artamonoff's valuable work **History of the Khazars**, these sources have lost their significance for us. This work provides, more or less, all the material we require regarding the political history of the Khazar Khaganate; however, whilst the information on Khazar palaeogeography and palaeoethnography is weak, it leaves a number of problems unresolved—problems that were highlighted in the footnotes added during our editing of the book and partially addressed in our subsequent publications.

M.I. Artamonoff's work is a history of events that shed light on the current problem. However, as is well known, light is refracted at the focal point of the lens and breaks down into coloured spectra. This is essential for the analysis of events. Red light signifies social evolutionary developments; orange, cultural traditions; turquoise, the ever-changing climatic shifts influenced by the oceans; and pale ultraviolet light indicates the invisible yet skin-scorching tension of passion. All of this can only be grasped by contemporary masters who synthesise the natural sciences with history and sociology.

The history of events is an essential springboard and the starting point of learning for the ethnologist. This history asks the question 'how?', but does not pose questions such as 'why?' or 'could it not have been otherwise?'. Yet these questions excite the twentieth-century reader. Consequently, the development of ideas over time does not diminish the value of Artamonoff's work; on the contrary, it contributes to the science of the new age.

6 Gumilev, L. N. *New Data on the History of the Khazars*//*Acta Archaeologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*. Vol. 19. Budapest, 1967, pp. 61–103.

Between 1959 and 1963, Khazar graves and cemeteries belonging to neighbouring peoples were unearthed in the Volga Delta.⁶ This made it possible to determine the history of the Caspian Sea's encroachment onto the land, a process which had a significant impact on the course of climatic changes in the steppe regions of Eurasia and on the fate of the Volga Khazars.⁷ Physical geography has contributed to history; however, all this does not appear sufficient to shed light on the rise and fall of Khazaria. In order to present the ethnic history of Khazaria and its neighbouring countries in a concise and original manner, down to the smallest details, it is necessary to expand upon ethnological methods and conduct further research.

Borders can be scattered, temporary and problematic. Since our thesis, *Ethnogenesis and the Earth's Biosphere*, has demonstrated that ethnic history is not an 'irregular record of events with no beginning or end' (A. Block) nor 'ordinary anecdotes of the past' (A. Pushkin), but rather a solid chain of cause-and-effect relationships with a beginning and an end, then, in order to achieve the objective, it is necessary to examine the events preceding the process, those occurring in the period under study, and the general panorama following the fifth act of the tragedy. Yes, the tragedies in particular must be examined. For every 'end' is a break in the chain of historical accounts.

For this reason, the author requests that the reader examine the history of the Lower Povolye⁸ and, by adding to their knowledge the account given here regarding the ethnic groups scattered across the Great Steppe—a historical zigzag that would never have occurred had events in the Near East during the first millennium AD unfolded even slightly differently—they may gain a deeper understanding.

There is a prevailing view amongst historians that, since the exact number of events that occurred in the past is unknown, the past cannot be fully grasped. This view, which cannot be proven anywhere, is essentially nothing more than a preconceived notion. Consequently, it is of no use to either the reader or the thinking individual. It is, of course, impossible for us to alter the laws of natural and social evolution at will; however, the attempts of certain individuals in this regard, even if they yield some observable results

7 Gumilev, L. N. *Les fluctuations du niveau de la mer Caspienne//Cahier du monde russe et soviétique*. Vol. VI. No. 3. Paris-Sorbonne, 1965, pp. 331–336.

8 See Gumilev, *Ethnogenesis*, Vol. IV; *A Thousand Years Around the Caspian Sea* (A Thousand Years Around the Caspian), Moscow, 1987. Hereafter: Gumilev, *Around the Caspian Sea*.

Moreover, it has not been endorsed by the world order. Another point is that they are attempting to fill the void left by this order through global, regional and period-specific processes; yet the twists and turns revealed by these endeavours provide the necessary degree of precision for establishing the facts of the matter. This is why a focus on detail does not constitute an obstacle for ethnic history. Although this obstacle does not disappear of its own accord, the situation remains the same.

Research 's Method

Unlike source-based historiography, ethnological research relies on a series of convincing facts drawn from monographs. Sources, however, are scrutinised using historical criticism. However, if new material has been discovered, or if a review of existing material has become necessary, or if little-known information has been obtained from neighbouring regions relevant to our subject, the research has been conducted using classical methods and remains within the confines of those methods.

Failure to take these conditions into account would have turned our work into a text of the trivial sort—one that, whilst catching the reader's attention, essentially offers them nothing new or significant.

A significant portion of M.I. Artamonoff's work consists of a mass of detailed accounts taken from sources, the repetition of which serves no purpose. On the contrary, the work lacks an analysis of international political and cultural relations, as well as the ethnic historical backdrop against which the Caspian tragedy—which led to the demise of a great nation—unfolded. Yet it is precisely this latter aspect that captures the interest of the modern reader.

In our view, which certainly does not differ from that of others, the problem of science lies not in the recording of well-known events, but rather in the identification of unknown facts not mentioned in the sources, using methods of synthesis and analysis. One of the most effective methods in historical synthesis is the application of the systematic approach.

Let us imagine ourselves as a literary work or a storyteller, or, conversely, as a reader to whom the author presents their work as a one-sided, ordinary source of information. In other words, the author assumes that the reader knows nothing or believes nothing, but is sufficiently successful in...

He is of the opinion that when the story is told, he will be informed and able to believe it. Years, and sometimes centuries, pass. Both the author and the reader have passed away; yet the work remains. This means that the direction charted by the work has been preserved. Thus, we understand that the reader—the contemporary—who holds views different from those of the author, is sometimes persuaded and captivated by the author's ability, and at other times maintains their own views. In any case, the reader's unspoken perspective re-emerges with striking clarity. If we recognise that historical events and circumstances remain relevant to the eras under examination, this final point may be dispelled.

Therefore, to define the unknown and understand why the role of hegemony in Eastern Europe shifted from Khazaria to Old Christian Russia, we shall begin with a known global context.

Well, does the reader know about these events? Must they be aware of them, including the plans and brief insights necessary to resolve the current problem? And finally, can they—or even someone with a vast store of knowledge—guess what an author means when they merely allude to an event from the early Middle Ages without actually describing it? I suppose not! Therefore, the writer must use a carefully prepared chronological table to grasp the meaning of the processes – which is, after all, the easiest way.

Should any fastidious reader feel disheartened upon realising that certain points mentioned in this work are identical to what they have read in other, more monumental works, let them regard these as an archive of information and an extensive bibliography, serving in place of numerous footnotes. As you are well aware, this work of ours is not a guidebook, but a work of reading and learning designed to give the reader the joy of knowledge.

Every historian begins by taking a broad view of the subject they are addressing. They wish to draw their map on a vast canvas, but are often forced to confine themselves to a series of studies. However, fate plays a sweet trick, and instead of the album of studies—that is, the partially limited research—a map is presented before them. As a rule, such 'maps' contain flaws that cast a shadow over the intended work. However, it would be wrong to dismiss such

attempts should not be dismissed. For this is an academic fallacy.

The history of the Caspian issue up to 1962 has been set out in M.I. Artamonoff's work, and in accordance with the general rule, we shall not repeat or re-examine these points. However, over the past twenty years in America, monographs addressing our subject have put forward original views to such an extent that we are compelled to either fully accept them or explain the reasons for our lack of confidence in them. Although it will become clear from reading our book why these views are incorrect, no quotations from them will be included, nor will we dwell on the unworthy remarks that do not befit their authors. Among these, the most paradoxical are the views of Arthur Koestler.⁹

According to A. Koestler, between the 7th and 12th centuries, a semi-nomadic empire inhabited by the Turkic-origin (?) Khazars stretched from the Black Sea to the Urals, and from the Caucasus to the point where the Don approaches the Volga. Controlling the strategically vital passageway (from where to where?) between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea, the Khazars played a significant role in the bloody events within the Eastern Roman Empire. They acted as a buffer between the raiding steppe peoples and the Byzantines (?). By defeating the Arabs, they prevented the Muslims from conquering Eastern Europe. They prevented the Vikings from invading Southern Russia towards the Byzantine borders. (Although the Vikings did enter Byzantium via the Mediterranean – L.G.).

In the 740s (the date is incorrect), the royal court and the ruling military class converted to Judaism. There is no information as to what caused this unusual event. It was likely prompted by the view that this would provide a certain advantage in terms of manoeuvrability between the rival Christian and Islamic 'worlds'.

Towards the 10th century, a new enemy—the Vikings—emerged, known more commonly as the Rus. (An old and incorrect identification: the Rus had been known since the 4th century). The Khazars' Sarkel fortress was breached in 965; Central Khazaria remained untouched, but the Khazar State had been brought to the brink of collapse.

9 Koestler, Arthur. *The Thirteenth Tribe: The Khazar Empire and its Heritage*. London, 1976. Hereafter: Koestler, *Thirteenth*.

The main thesis underlying the book is as follows: the wave of Jewish migration to Europe did not, as previously assumed, take place via the Mediterranean (or how else?), but via the Transcaucasus, through Poland and Central Europe. Consequently, the inhabitants of Eastern Europe—the descendants of the Jews—constitute the thirtieth generation of Israel. The reasons why this view has not gained acceptance will become clear later.

The perspective we have adopted—viewing the early history of Ancient Russia as a continuation of Russo-Khazar relations—allows us to avoid polemics over trivial matters. In the United States, two studies on the prehistoric Russians were published in the 1950s and 1960s.¹⁰ The Russian-language materials on which they relied are materials to which we have easy access. Both works contain numerous minor inconsistencies. The most significant of these is the uncritically accepted theory that the inhabitants of the third centre, comprising the region between the Azov and Black Seas, were supposedly descended from the Sarmatians (Roxolani). This view, which has emerged in Russia, is not accepted by most authoritative scholars, including the author himself. Nevertheless, this version can be refuted both by a meticulous examination of the details in the sources and by presenting a specific version that reduces these details to interpretations lacking any basis in hypothesis or evidence. The second approach is preferable; for the Romans, upon stepping into their boots, would refer to the small pebble causing discomfort as a ‘skrupulus’. It was sufficient merely to shake out the boot and not examine what it was. On the other hand, our academic standards are higher than those of the US. This is because, in our country, dates known to everyone to be incorrect are not published; and special hypotheses are regarded by the reader as superfluous. G.V. Vernadsky, whilst preparing chronological tables concerning the ancient Russians, placed asterisks beside the questionable dates. Yet the correctness of these dates is known to us.¹¹ As for S. Lyaševski, he too cites the ‘Vlesova Chronicle’—which has been published in its entirety and has not been subjected to historical criticism—to corroborate his hypothesis.¹² He did not do this in vain. Because this

10 Vernadsky, G. *The Origins of Russia*. Oxford, 1959. Hereafter: Vernadsky, *The Origins*; Lyaševskiy, S. *History of Christianity in the Russian Lands from the 1st to the 11th Century and Essays on the Prehistory of Russia*. New York; Brooklyn, 1967. Hereafter: Lyaševskiy, *History of Christianity*.

11 Vernadsky, G. *Ancient Russia*. New Haven, 1952. Hereafter: Vernadsky, *Ancient*.

12 See Lesnoy, S. *The Vlesova Book*. Winnipeg, 1966.

It would have been dangerous to rely on this work. But did Umili, a descendant of the Yurik dynasty via Prince Svyatoyar or his daughter Gostomysl, suddenly steal this imaginary or illegible text? Yet such a blunder could lead to certain conclusions and consequently render the entire study worthless. Are such corrections necessary for history? S. Lyashvsky himself states: "... there is nothing in this chronicle that would necessarily alter our knowledge of the past."¹³ Consequently, although the authors' views have been taken into account, these works do not possess characteristics from which we can benefit ...

Let us agree on the terms .

In historical studies, it is often necessary to use highly technical scientific terms. This situation makes it particularly difficult for the parties involved to understand one another, especially during discussions. 'The Great Steppe' is a theoretical definition. This is because the steppe region of the Eurasian continent comprises numerous distinct landscapes: mountain ranges dotted with forests, river valleys, and plains situated between barren deserts. Nevertheless, this term has become widely accepted, and there is no harm in using it.

However, the situation becomes far more complex where ethno-cultural boundaries are fluid. For instance, the term "Europe" used by Herodotus did not, in his time, encompass the lands of Scythia and the Hyperboreans. In the Middle Ages, it fell out of use for a time. This was because Spain had become the "East" by 711; Byzantium constituted a distinct cultural region; and the Baltic basin had become a constant theatre of war between the feudal-Catholic "Christian world" and the pagan Slavs, Prussians, Lithuanians and Estonians.

'Old Russia' is an even more complex term. It has become widespread, but not in the sense one might expect. Its history, however, is entirely riddled with contradictory explanations. If we examine historical sources from the 12th and 13th centuries, although the word 'Russia' existed at that time, we cannot find the term 'Old Russia' in them. This term only came into use in the 15th century, when Ivan III laid claim to all the lands bequeathed by the Yurikoviches; thus, a plan for unity emerged that would not interrupt the historical process from Yurik onwards. However, according to the accepted plan, only the capitals were arranged in a regular order—

¹³ Lyashvskiy, *History of Christianity*, p. 169.

: Kyiv, Vladimir, Moscow, St Petersburg. Periods of turmoil and decline, meanwhile, were regarded as the result of the great princes' misguided policies. The artificiality and skilful construction of this hypothesis are plain to see; yet it has developed not as a scientific generalisation, but rather as the cornerstone of the political programme of the great Moscow princes and tsars.¹⁴

A.Y. Présnyakoff notes that the fundamental flaw in this official scheme is an indifference towards Western Russia, and indeed the effective exclusion of it from Russian history. This distinction, observed throughout the entire history of Russia, extends as far as Polish history, which is certainly incorrect. Indeed, in order to find a place for the Golden Horde, it was deemed appropriate to put forward the hypothesis of Tatar domination.¹⁵ This is a limited and inadequate hypothesis that requires further study by the state institute.

Cultural studies, an integral part of history, lead to a different conclusion, as demonstrated in P. N. Milukov's preliminary work, **A History of Russian Civilisation**. The thesis put forward in this work was as follows: 'It may be said that the Russian people, having achieved significant successes in the south, were compelled to resume their historical mission in the north.'¹⁶

A good observation; but an unacceptable style of interpretation. According to Milukoff's view, Russia did not exist as a unified entity until the 16th century, and each region led its own distinct historical life. This description is a product of the widespread developmentalist theory of the time, which was accepted uncritically and examined historical development using the 'leap' method.

14 Présnyakov, A. Y. *Lectures on Russian History*. Moscow, 1938, pp. 1–2. Hereafter: Présnyakov, *Lectures*.

15 The nature of relations between the Golden Horde and Russia has been skilfully established. It is certain that the Russians bestowed the title of 'khan' upon the ruler and paid 'tribute' to the Horde, but the khans did not interfere in the internal affairs of the Russians; and whilst, after adopting Islam, they demanded that their own nomadic subjects set aside the old Mongol law and religion, they did not make such a demand of the Russians. To be more precise, there was a confederation of tribes subordinate to the Orda, but Russia was recognised as an independent nation that had joined the Orda not through conquest but by treaty. (See Gumilëv L. N. *In Search of the Imaginary Kingdom*, p. 398 ff. (In *Search of the Imaginary Kingdom*, Selenge Publications). Hereafter: Gumilev, *Imaginary*. ;Apocryphal Dialogue//Neva. 1988. No. 3, 4).

16 Présnyakov, *Lectures*, p. 3.

The work of Prof. M. S. Gruševskij of Lviv, who was working in Austria-Hungary, was also a step backwards and was an attempt to justify Austria's occupation of Galicia from a political standpoint. This work proposed a framework that would serve as a counter-reminder to the Russian State. Poland was presented as a continuation of Kievan Rus', whilst Vladimir-Moscow Rus' was portrayed as a distinct people, a rival, or even an enemy of "Ukrainian Rus'".¹⁷ This view belongs to a period at the beginning of the 20th century when the concept of "ethnos" had not yet been discovered. A.Y. Présnyakoff identifies this ambiguity as one of the primary difficulties in resolving the problem raised here.¹⁸

The author also refutes M.S. Grushevsky's view by demonstrating that there was absolutely no enmity, or indeed any division, between the South and North Russians during the Kievan period. "The hostility between the people of Kyiv and Novgorod, and between the people of Kyiv and Suzdal, was similar to the rivalry between the people of Vladimir and Rostov during the civil war between the sons of Andrei Bogolubsky."¹⁹ I would add to this: "the hostility between the people of Kyiv and Chernigov..." It suffices to recall the brutal suppression of Igor Olgovich in 1147 and the massacre of Kiev in 1203, from which it would never fully recover. However, it was only after the conquest of Kyiv, Chernihiv, Kursk and Smolensk by Olgerd and Vytautas in the 14th century that the destinies of South-Western Russia and North-Eastern Russia diverged. Yet, in the 17th century, Ukraine, and in the 18th century, Belarus and Volhynia, were united with Russia. Moreover, this was not through the conquest of Moscow, but by being liberated from the Polish yoke, which was even heavier than that of the Horde.

The contemporary view accepted by Soviet academic circles also regards the 14th century as the period when the 'parting of the ways' occurred between the principalities of Suzdal and Vladimir, situated on the north-eastern border of ancient Kievan Rus', and when the general Russian people were divided into three new groups: the Great Russians, the Little Russians and the Ukrainians.²⁰ This

17 Grushevsky, M. S. *History of Ukraine-Rus* in 5 vols. Vol. I-III. Lviv, 1904-1905; Vol. IV. Lviv, 1903; Vol. V. Lviv, 1905; see also Présnyakov, *Lectures*, pp. 4-5.

18 Présnyakov, offering a critical perspective on racial, linguistic, and cultural-psychological ethnic classifications, arrives at the conclusion that "States arise before peoples" (*ibid.*, p. 6), yet fails to explain why they emerge. For our perspective, one may refer to our work entitled "Ethnogenesis".

19 Présnyakov, *Lectures*, p. 10.

20 See: *History of the USSR from Ancient Times to the Present Day*. 2 Volumes. Moscow, 1966.

We have no objection to the dating; yet there remain questions awaiting answers: 1) On what grounds are the three concepts mentioned above incorrect?; 2) How can we correct a known error and identify the cause of the general misconception? The brief answers to these questions are as follows: 1) The chronicler Nestor proposes the year 862 as the date of Russia's foundation;
2) The works of A. A. Shakhmatov and D. S. Likhachev on the ancient Slavs, and the author of these lines' rules of ethnogenesis.

A. A. Shakhmatov holds the view that the history of the Eastern Slavic and Russian peoples began long before Yurik. An explanation of his theory regarding the origins of the Eastern Slavs²¹ is not our concern. It is sufficient for us to know that this theory is valid. Shahmatoff identifies the Western Dvina Basin as the Slavs' first homeland, whilst designating their second homeland as Povislenye—a region abandoned by the Bastarnae in the 3rd–2nd centuries BC and settled by the Goths around the 2nd century AD. The Slavs' participation in the Great Migrations of that period forced them to split into two groups: the western Vends and the southern Slavs. The Ants (Polans), who had also turned towards the south-east at that time, were likewise divided amongst themselves.

From an ethnological perspective, we should note that a significant demographic shift was taking place here. This marked the beginning of the ethnogenesis process for the Slavs and the Byzantines (Romaioi – Christians). According to the proposal put forward by Shakhmatov, which was also accepted by A.Y. Presnyakov, when the Avars and Bulgars drove the Slavs from the shores of the Black Sea, the latter came and occupied the forested strip between the Dnieper and the Dniester, namely Volhynia, which indicates the existence of the first pan-Slavic state destroyed by the Avars. In the 7th century, the Khazars dispersed the Bulgars; the pan-Slavic kingdom, meanwhile, was divided and collapsed into Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Pomerania.

Two waves of Slavic migration occurred from the southern Baltic region towards the east: the Krivichs, who founded Smolensk, Polotsk, Vitebsk and Pskov, and the Slovenes, who founded Novgorod and spread across the Upper Volga region. The Radimichs and Vyatichs, however, came from 'Lyahov'.²² This migration led to the collapse of the existing tribal confederation—

21 See Shakhmatov, A. A. *The Earliest History of the Russian People*. Moscow, 1919. Hereafter: Shakhmatov, *The Earliest History*. Cf. Présnyakov, *Lectures*, pp. 14–26.

22 See Shakhmatov, A. A. 'On the Question of Polish Influence on the Old Russian Language' // *Russian Philological Bulletin*. Vol. 1. Warsaw, 1913, pp. 1–

12. Cf. PVL. H. ζζ, pp. 225–226. Hereafter: Shakhmatov, *On the Question*.

paved the way for its decline. Finally, in the 9th–10th centuries, Kievan Rus' – “the great event of East Slavic history” – was established, though it was destroyed in the second half of the 12th century.²³ From the word “destroyed” used by A. Y. Présnyakoff, it follows that during the phase of obscurity that developed alongside the period of cultural ascendancy (as is the case) the Old Russian ethnos survived until the 14th century and only ceded its place to the modern East Slavic ethnos in the 15th century, it is understood not as ethnogenesis but as political disintegration.

At this point, even if we were to accept Nestor's explanation regarding the “summoning of the Varangians to Novgorod” without subjecting it to criticism, it is clear that the usurpation of Yurik's throne constitutes an episode in the thousand-year history of the Eastern Slavs. For even the most esteemed chroniclers remained oblivious and unaware of what were among the greatest events of that era.

Given this, let us consider a consistent version in which the process of ethnogenesis appears to be a form of evolution. Today, palaeontologists divide the development of each independent group of living organisms into three stages. In the first stage, a rapid trend of development is observed. In the second stage, it expands its range by acquiring characteristics suited to different conditions. In the third stage, however, a narrow-scope internal specialisation occurs, sometimes leading to extinction, sometimes to stagnation. A change in the conditions to which a living being has become accustomed gives rise to a species or, in our context, an ethnic group, and leads to a weakening, particularly because the system's capacity for development has diminished. In palaeontology, this event is viewed as a ‘disturbance of equilibrium’²⁴; in history, it is referred to as an ‘ethnic process rupture’.

Kievan Rus' also represents the third stage of Slavic ethnogenesis. This is because it emerged at a time when the unified existence of the Slavs had come to an end, preserving the former common language or linguistic affinity as a kind of memento.

We have thus outlined the provisional boundaries of Old Russia. As for its territory, this too requires further clarification.

²³ Présnyakoff, *Lectures*, p. 12.

²⁴ Rostovtsev, K. O. *Why Did the Dinosaurs Die Out?* // Leningradskaya Pravda. 1983. 25 November.

Eastern Slav, But Not Yet Russian

Seventy years later, it became clear that A.A. Shakhmatov's observation was correct. Thanks to the work of Ukrainian archaeologists and historians, the archaeological cultural zones of the original Slavic homeland were identified, and the dates were established with certainty.²⁵ The beginning of the Slavic expansion coincides with the era of cultural fragmentation. The Slavs moved from the upper reaches of the Vistula southwards to the Podneprov region, and northwards to the Upper Dnieper, Desna and Oka; in the 3rd–4th centuries, that is, during the period of the 'Gothic Wars', they reached the steppes around the Danube and the Black Sea in the south, and as far as the left bank of the Dnieper in the north-east. It has been suggested that a demographic explosion and the depletion of uninhabited lands were ^{the causes} of this migration; however, this appears paradoxical when one considers that the will to survive is linked to an increase in military strength, whilst the risk of death in battle is high.

The Slavs ^{continued} to spread westwards across the Carpathians to the Tisza, as far as the Danube upstream, and into the region between the Vistula and the Oder rivers;²⁷ in the south, they crossed the Danube in 550–551 and, by the 9th century, ^{had} occupied 'the whole of Hellas'.²⁸ Some also dispersed into Asia Minor.

It has now been established that the Slavs were not the indigenous people of Eastern Europe, but rather arrived there in the 8th century, settling in the Podneprov and Lake Ilmen basins. Until the Slavic invasion, a people who were certainly not Slavs—namely the Rus or Ross—lived in these lands. As early as the 10th century, Liutprand of Cremona wrote: "The Greeks called this people, whom we refer to as *the Nordmannos* in relation to the lands they inhabited, *the Russos*." And this people had

25 Slavs, had spread from the regions between the Dniester, Pripyat and Upper Vistula. (See Baran, V. D. *The Formation of Early Medieval Slavic Culture and the Problem of Slavic Settlement* // Slavs on the Dniester and the Danube. Kiev. 1983, p. 40. Hereafter: Baran: *Slojeniye*.)

26 See Braychevsky, M. Yu. 'The Slavs in the Danube Region and the Balkans in the 6th–8th Centuries' // The Slavs on the Dniester and the Danube, pp. 221, 222. Hereafter: Braychevsky, *The Slavs in the Danube Region*.

27 Varan, *Slojniye*, p. 45.

28 Braychevsky, *Slavs in the Danube Region*, p. 225. The people of the Peloponnese remained Slavic-speaking until the 19th century, that is, until Greece was liberated from Turkish rule. However, the fact that textbooks and literature were prepared in Modern Greek forced the descendants of the Slavs, the Maniots, to undergo a linguistic shift that distinguished the 'Greeks' from other South Slavs.

The Rus' people lived side by side with the Pechenegs and Khazars in Russia.²⁹ Some words remaining from the Ross language—names and place-names—indicate that they spoke a Germanic language. In the work of Constantine Porphyrogenitus, the names of the Dnieper tribes are recorded in both Russian and Slavic. Those in Russian are Essupi, Ulvoren, Gelandra, Eyfar, Varuforos, Leanti, Struvun; those in Slavic are Ostrovuniprax, Néyasit, Vulniprax, Verutsi, Navrezi.

Daily life was also different among the Slavs and the Russians, particularly in minor matters: the Russians would wash in a communal basin before lunch, whilst the Slavs would wash under running water. The Russians would shave their heads, leaving a tuft of hair on the crown; the Slavs, on the other hand, would cut their hair in a circular shape. The Russians lived in military camps, subsisted on the spoils of war, and sold some of these to the Khazar Jews. The Slavs, on the other hand, were engaged in agriculture and livestock farming. Writers of the 10th century never confused the Slavs with the Russians.³⁰

In this context, it is not possible to regard the Russians as the Scandinavian Varangians. For the latter began their expeditions in the 9th century. The Russians, however, were known as an independent people by 6th-century writers such as Jordanes and Zaxarii Ritor. Bishop Adalbert's portrayal of Grand Duchess Olga as the queen of the Rugians appears to be the only uncontested version. The Rugians were a people whose western branch perished in Noricum and Italy in the 5th century, whilst the eastern branch managed to survive in Eastern Europe until the 10th century, bequeathing their dynastic and state name to the Slavs.

Archaeologists identify the Ancient Slavs with the Chernyakhov and Penkov cultures. It is also believed that the ethnic composition of the peoples associated with these cultures was intermingled. In the region stretching from the lands beyond the Danube in the south-west to the Kursk region, and from Southern Polesia in the north-east to the vicinity of the Northern Black Sea, during the 2nd–5th centuries, alongside the Slavs, there were Dacian-Thracians, Sarmatians and, possibly, Goths

29 Based on Platonov, S. F.'s **Lektsii po russkoy istorii**. St Petersburg. No date, p. 61.

30 For further information, see Artamonov, **The Khazars**, pp. 289–295.

31 Vinokur, N. S. 'The Chernyakhov Tribes on the Dnieper and Danube' // **The Slavs on the Dniester and Danube**, p. 131. Hereafter: Vinokur, **The Chernyakhov Tribes**.

32 Syedov, V. V. *The Slavs of the Upper Dnieper and Podvinya*. Moscow, 1970, p. 7. Hereafter: Syedov, *The Slavs of the Upper*.

33 Vinokur, *The Chernyakhov Tribes*, p. 133.

were living there. However, following the Hun invasion, only the Slavs who had intermingled with the Get and Dac tribes in the 6th–7th centuries remained.³⁴

Archaeologists may be limited in their scope. We can define an era satisfactorily, but it is impossible to define the ethnic structure. As material culture depends on environmental conditions and technology, it can easily be altered by neighbours. Yet here, both are contemporaneous. The form of burial indicates a culture; yet religion never corresponds to a people in a single, unambiguous sense. Another significant point is that the Slavic cultures of the 6th–7th centuries differed from the Chernyakhovsk culture. Burial sites were disappearing; cemeteries were vanishing one by one. In short, the older cultures and their representatives were substrates that were rapidly overshadowed by the Slavs, who were in a phase of ethnic (passionate) ascent. Consequently, in Slavic burial culture, it is possible to see not a repetition of the earlier cultures, but a synthesis of them.³⁵

However, the Slavic ethnogenesis had been disrupted by an invasion from the east. The Chionites, who lived in the lower reaches of the Yaksart (Syr Darya), had fled to Europe—where they became known as the Avars or Obri—after escaping from the Turks.³⁶ These were the heirs of the legendary Turan and an ancient people; yet the young Eastern Slavs had fallen victim to this ancient predator. In 602, the Avars attacked the Ants, the former Byzantine allies among the Eastern Slavs.³⁷ Indeed, following this attack, the name ‘Ant’ ceases to appear in historical sources.³⁸ From this date onwards, Slavic unity ceased to exist. For the Obri separated the southern Balkan Slavs from the northerners or the Vends of the Baltic region. The descendants of the Ants, known as ^{the} Polyan³⁹ in the Slavic language, merged with the Rus, who were regarded by 10th-century German chroniclers as a branch of the Rugians. The Polyan and Rus peoples formed a single ethnic group

34 Pxirodnik, O. M. *On the Question of the Presence of the Ants in the Carpathian-Danubian Lands*// The Slavs on the Dniester and the Danube, p. 191. Hereafter: Pxirodnik, *On the Presence of the Ants*.

35 Varan, V. D. *Slojniye*, p. 40.

36 Gumilev, *The Ancient Turks*, pp. 34–35.

37 Theophylactes Simokattes, *History*. Translated by S. P. Konratyev. Moscow, 1957. Book VIII, 5, p. 180. Hereafter: Simokattes, *History*.

38 Jordanes. *On the Origin and Deeds of the Goths*. Introduction, translation, and commentary by E.N. Skri'inskaya (hereafter Jordanes). Moscow, 1960, p. 220.

39 Vraychevsky, M. Yu. *The Origin of the Rici*. Kyiv, 1968, p. 155. Hereafter: Vraychevsky, *Ryici*.

The state in its current form, which we today refer to as 'Russia in the narrow sense', did not come into existence until the 10th century.⁴⁰ This is because the state incorporated a significant portion of the Eastern European Slavic tribes that were subsequently conquered and brought under its rule; we shall return to this matter later.

As we have seen, we are faced with a mixture of two distinct processes: The natural phenomenon of ethnogenesis, which began in the 1st century, and the establishment of the social state—a process briefly interrupted by the Goths, Avars and Normans, and which only actually persisted until the 11th century during the reign of Yaroslav the Wise.

The inception of the 'Russian State'—or, more accurately, the 'Kievan Khaganate', as it was termed by contemporaries such as Metropolitan Illarion [Hilarion]—does not correspond to a period of passionate ascent, excessive fervour, or a phase of rupture. Rather, it corresponds to a phase of stagnation characterised by a rich development of literature and art, which stands as a barrier between later historians and the era of lived calamities, unrecorded victories and heroic epics.

The Slavs are a minor subject in our research; consequently, it was essential to identify the widespread yet transient nature of Russian history as the result of two disparate driving forces and a multitude of ethnic interactions. The cultural tradition conditioned by the heroism of warriors, however, is the unchanging red thread that has run through all nations for centuries. For it is not a product of the ever-changing natural world, but rather the product of a consciousness whose aim is conservatism—that is, the product of cultures.⁴¹

However, since the history of a single country has always been part of world history, and world history is itself a part of the history of the Earth, the most appropriate vantage point for observing the East and the West is to take the northern shores of the Caspian Sea as a reference point and return to the issue of diverse ethnic interactions—that is, the central theme of our research.

40 Nasonov, A. N. *The Russian Land and the Formation of the Territory of the Old Russian State*. Moscow, 1951. Hereafter: Nasonov, *The Russian Land*; Rybakov, B. A. *The Ancient Rus' // Soviet Archaeology*. Vol. X. 1953. Hereafter: Rybakov, *The Ancient Rus'*; Artamonov, *The Khazars*, pp. 289–290.

41 Gumilev, *Ethnogenesis*, L. 1989.

CHAPTER ONE

**THE ETHNOSPHERE GEOGRAPHY OF
THE FIRST MILLENNIUM B.C.**

WHO IS WHO?

In the Extinct Passioner Region



The Muslim Super-ethnos



Christian Super-ethnos



Nomadic Super-ethnos

I. IN THE EXTINCT PASSIONATE REGION

1. The Land of the Khazars

Landscapes, like ethnic groups, have their own history. The Volga Delta prior to the 3rd century bore little resemblance to its present-day form. For in that era, the arid steppes between the Baire Hills were washed by the crystal-clear waters of the Volga, which flowed into the Caspian Sea—further south than it does today. Also at that time, the Volga's flow was much lower, and it did not flow to its present-day mouth but instead flowed further east via the Aktübe and Buzan. Who knows, perhaps it flowed into the western part of the Aral Sea, which was connected to the Caspian by a narrow channel.

The Sarmat-o-Alan, that is, the relics of the Turanians, date from that period. At that time, the Khazars were still living in the lower reaches of the Terek.

In the 2nd–3rd centuries, Atlantic cyclones had shifted their paths northwards. The rains had ceased to wash away the steppe's gradually desertifying surface; they had begun to nourish the well-watered banks of the Kama, situated between the Volga and Oka rivers. The winter rainfall, in particular, was of a notable magnitude. The melting of the damp snowdrifts resulted in spring floods.

The Volga swallowed all these murky waters; this created narrow channels in its lower reaches. It was then that the present-day delta, extending southwards as far as the Buzaçi Peninsula (today's Mangyshlak), took shape. The shallow waters had begun to sustain large, spiny fish. The banks of the river branches were covered with lush forests; the valleys between the hills were adorned with verdant meadows. Only the steppe plants, which found their place on the hills (the vertical zone), had spread westwards and eastwards (where the present-day Bahtemir and Kıraç branches are located

) had retreated towards the west and east; in the core revealed by the azonal landscape, lotus flowers had bloomed; frogs had begun to croak, and gulls and herons had started to flap their wings. The country's landscape had changed.

By that time, the people living in the country had also changed. The Sarmatians of the steppes had abandoned the riverbanks, which were covered in damp grass that the cattle would not eat—indeed, which they found repulsive—and where the cattle herds found no respite. Consequently, the Khazars had scattered across the shores of the Caspian Sea, where the water level is now six metres lower. They had found fertile lands for hunting waterfowl along the fish-rich rivers; they had found pastures for their horses amongst the Brownian hills. The Khazars had also brought pomegranate saplings with them and planted them in their new homeland—a land they had acquired not through bloodshed, but rather as a gift of nature. The harsh winter had destroyed the pomegranate saplings; but in their place, Dagestan varieties were planted time and again.¹ For the ties between the Terek and Volga Khazars had not been severed.

The Alans and Huns, who had brought the steppes around the Caspian Sea under their control, posed no threat to the Khazars. Life in the delta was concentrated around the channels, and these channels formed a labyrinth for lost strangers. The current in the channels was swift; the banks were covered in dense thickets, and it was not possible to land at just any point. Any horseman wishing to enter the Caspian could not cross these channels, which were surrounded by thickets. Moreover, whilst the local population could easily seize the initiative and strike the enemy from unexpected directions, a horseman arriving in the region would be deprived of his most important attribute: his ability to manoeuvre.

Winter days were even more difficult. The layer of ice covering the fast-flowing rivers was thin and sparse; yet, on very cold winter days, it could bear the weight of a horse and rider. However, in areas covered with a thin layer of ice, there was also the danger of sinking to the bottom and freezing if the ice broke. Even if the traveller managed to escape and light a fire to warm themselves, they would then be exposed to the deadly blows of an enemy approaching in secret.

Khazaria was a natural fortress; but, alas, it was surrounded by enemies. The Khazars, secure in their own homes, were very...

1 Potapenko, A. I. *The Ancient Lands of Russia*. Rostov, 1976, p. 50. Hereafter: Potapenko, *The Ancient Lands*.

did not dare to take the risk of venturing out onto the steppe. The more varied the landscape regions on which a production system was established, the greater the prospects for economic development. However, as the Volga delta did not possess a particularly varied structure, it was unsuitable for the intensive pastoralism required for high-yield production—which was of the utmost necessity to people—precisely because it did not require much labour; yet, the limited extent of usable pastures also reduced the number of animals that could be reared. For nature, however, the nomadic way of life was harmless.

As the Khazars did not live on the steppe, they were not nomads. However, they were able to gather only the surplus of nature's bounty: fish, pomegranates and garden fruits. In short, the ethnic groups living in the lower reaches of the Volga during that period were in a state of homeostasis, that is, a balance between nature and living beings. In this system, ethnic groups rarely came into contact with one another. This was because there was nothing to warrant war. Moreover, taking foreign women—accustomed to a different way of life—as wives meant bringing a poor housekeeper into the husband's home.

The larger the target, the easier it is to hit. We shall therefore examine our subject—namely, the tragedy of the Khazar people—within the framework of the histories of neighbouring countries. As this history will serve merely as a supporting framework for our subject, it will, of course, be examined in its 'broad outlines'. However, if the global international relations that encompass little Khazaria from one end to the other are reviewed, and the eternal, ever-changing face of life—the rhythm of natural events in the biosphere—can be captured, then cultural history will dance in all its colours.

2. Ethnos is “a reflection of light ”

By advancing the view that the actual existence of an ethnos cannot be considered without a passionate impulse, we may have contradicted our own thesis. For example, the Khazars were known to Byzantine and Persian authors in the 4th century, and to Armenian authors in the 3rd century.² However, neither the 2nd

2 In his work **History of Armenia**, Moses Dashorenchi writes that between the years 193 and 213, “the Khazars and the Basel (Barsil) [Borçalı] united, passed through the Cor (Derbent Pass) strait... reached the Kura and scattered across all its banks” (Artamonov, M.I., **History of the Khazars**, p. 115, citing

meridian shift of the 4th century (from Scandinavia to Palestine), nor the latitudinal shift of the 4th century (from Arabia to Northern China) could have affected them. How, then, are we to explain the ethnogenesis these peoples underwent over a thousand years, and the formation of such numerous remnants as the Greben and Lower Don Cossacks, the Astrahan Tatars and the Crimean Karaites? In short, the Khazars were able to present themselves as a 'valuable' ethnos that had passed through all stages of development; but at what cost?

The Russian historian Georgi Amartol was right to compare the Khazars with the Scythians.³ In his seminal work on the Scythians, however, the author regarded them as a people older than the Sarmatians of southern Eastern Europe.⁴ The steppes' wetlands were successively occupied by the Sarmatians (3rd century BC), the Huns (4th century AD), the Bulgars (5th century AD), the Avars (6th century AD), the Magyars and the Pechenegs, they lived in peace on the shores covered with lush thickets, which the nomads, their constant enemies, found insufficient.

The Khazars, descendants of the ancient European peoples of Western Eurasia, had maintained their existence as a distinct ethnic group until the late 6th century, when the situation changed abruptly, thanks to the bountiful gifts nature had bestowed upon them.

The most significant role in the ethnogenesis of the Khazars fell to the newly emerged ancient Turkic people, who were appropriately termed 'Turkuts' to distinguish them from other Turkic-speaking peoples.⁵ The Turkuts, in the year 439,

(den) states. M.I. Artamonoff regards the mention of the Khazars at such an early date as an anachronism (ibid., 131); however, he does not provide any evidence to substantiate this suspicion. Yet historical sources lead to the conclusion that the Khazars lived in the lower reaches of the Terek and Sulak rivers in the 2nd century. However, they did not reach the Volga via the dry steppes, but rather by following the shores of the Caspian Sea, whose water level at that time was -36 m, i.e. 8 m lower than in the 20th century. (See Gumilëv, L.N., *Xazarıy i Kaspiy* // *Vesti LGU*. 1974. No. 6, pp. 84-95; On 'e. *'Xazariq i Terek*' // *Tam 'e*, 1974, No. 24, pp. 78-88).

3 PVL. H. ı, p. 14.

4 *Tam 'e*, H. ıı, p. 223.

5 The word 'Turk' has three meanings. In the 6th-8th centuries, it referred to a small ethnic group (Turküt) that ruled a vast state in the Great Steppe (el) and was wiped from history by the mid-8th century. These Turks were of Mongoloid origin. The Khazar dynasty also descended from them; however, the Khazars'

They originated from a small group loyal to Prince A-shih-na, who had fled from the invincible, ruthless Tabgach and come from north-western China. The composition of this group was mixed; however, the dominant group were the Sienpi, that is, the ancient Mongols. Settling on the foothills of the Altai and Hanghai mountains and intermingling with the local peoples, these people were skilled in smelting iron and forging weapons. Their first khan, Tumin [Bumín], defeated the Ju-jan, who had held sway over the steppes between the 4th and 5th centuries, and established the First Turkic Khaganate.

Tumin's brother, Istemi-khan, had been placed at the head of the army tasked with bringing the western steppes under his control. Istemi advanced as far as the shores of the Don and the Black Sea. Whilst some tribes fled before Istemi, a second group chose to submit. A third group of people, however, preferred to collaborate with the conquerors in order to reap the rewards of the victories achieved. The Bolgar Uturgur [Utrigur] tribe, living between the Khazars and the Kuban and Don rivers, belonged to this group. When the Great Khaganate disintegrated at the beginning of the 7th century, these Khazars and Uturgurs became part of the Western Khaganate. Both peoples willingly assisted their new masters in the wars against Byzantium and Persia. However, within the Western Turkic Khaganate, two tribal federations had formed, vying for power against the weak khans. While the Uturgurs supported one of these groups, the Khazars naturally supported the other. After the complete defeat of the Khaganate, they elected the Prince of Achina, who had fled to them seeking refuge, as their khagan (650).⁶

Eight years later, the conquest of the Western Turkic Khaganate by the armies of the Tang Empire proved advantageous for the Khazars, who had previously sided with the defeated prince; however, it was a disaster for the Bulgars—that is, the Uturgurs—who were left without the support of a khagan wielding supreme authority (658). Following this event, around the 670s, the Khazars

were themselves a European people of the Dagestan type. In the 9th–13th centuries, however, 'Turk' became the general term for the warlike northern peoples, including the Magyars, Russians and Slavs. This cultural-historical meaning acquired by the word has no connection whatsoever with its etymology. In the view of contemporary Orientalists, however, the term 'Turk' denotes a linguistic group represented by ethnic groups speaking the same language, despite having different origins.

6 For further details, see Artamonov, *The Khazars*, p. 171; Gumilev, *The Ancient Turks*, p. 238.

After the Bulgars were slaughtered, they dispersed, with some crossing to the Kama, some to the Danube, some to Hungary and some to Italy.

At the same time, the Khazars would be forced to fight against the Arab invasion, which had seized territories stretching from India to Aquitaine. However, the war in the Caucasus continued with alternating victories, contrary to the expectations of the conquerors of Iran and Spain; moreover, the Khazars' conquest of the Transcaucasus coincided with the Arab campaigns (662–744) that reached as far as the north of Derbent but were unable to hold their ground there. Where, then, did the Khazars—a small and remnant ethnic group—derive this immense passion that afforded them the opportunity to measure themselves against the most powerful and aggressive state of the 8th century, despite being on unequal terms? The Arabs held the numerical advantage. For the Alans, Magyars, Burtas, Mordvins, Slavs, and worst of all the Bulgars, did not support the Khazar khans, who belonged to the Turkic dynasty. As early as 739, the mountain tribes of Dagestan, who were loyal to Mervan, the governor-general of Azerbaijan and Armenia, and who had taken up positions against the impregnable walls of ^{Derbent}, along with the kingdoms of Serir, Tuman [Tümen, Gazi-Kumuk], Zirix-Geran, Kaytag [Kaytak], Tabasaran, Lakz [Leket/İlekeli] and Ti-lan held a special position.⁸ Yet the small Khazar state was heroically defending its independence. Why was this?

Let us recall that for a full century (558–650), the Turkic khans used the Khazar lands as a base for military operations. After crossing the arid steppe, the Turkic warriors would rest here and, on their return from Crimea or the Transcaucasus, would bring back abundant spoils of war. No doubt they also needed women, who were known to be a source of morale for victorious warriors. Thus, the children born after these military campaigns saw themselves as true Khazars. They had never known their real fathers; they had been raised among the Khazars and grown up in the Volga delta. From the Turks, they had inherited certain anthropological and physiognomic traits, including passion. If this symbiosis managed to endure for over a century, it means that the passion required for it to become the remnant of an actually existing ethnic group had been sufficiently instilled by outsiders.

7 Derbent was finally conquered by the Arabs in 685–686 and, together with Shirvan, broke away from the Caliphate in the 10th century.

8 See: *History of Dagestan*. Vol. I. Moscow, 1967, p. 153.

However, the more active period in the ethnogenesis of the Khazars was the era (650–810) when the Khazars were ruled by Turkic khans belonging to the Ačina dynasty, the ruling house of the Great Turkic Khaganate (552–745). The Acha prince and his comrades-in-arms, who had sought refuge in this country, were appointed rulers by the Khazars; however, they neither mingled with the masses nor took a stance against them. They continued their nomadic way of life and returned to their homes along the Volga only in winter. They had led the wars against the Arabs and, as the former warriors of the steppe, had taught the Khazars how to repel the attacks of regular armies. Although they remained infidels who worshipped the Blue Sky and the Black Earth, they had shown respect for other religions they had not studied in depth. It was this tolerance that would lead to their downfall. But why and how?

3. Was the culture in Khazaria advanced ?

It is strange; yet for a long time, it was believed that the steppe peoples of Eurasia, and particularly the nomads, lacked the capacity for cultural development, had no history of their own, and naturally possessed no original art. However, archaeological finds unearthed in the Altai Mountains, Mongolia and Siberia have demonstrated that the peoples of Eurasia did indeed possess their own art. Their history, too, has now been recorded. Decoded texts have shown that these peoples possessed philosophical literature, whilst their folklore contained original themes. They had everything; yet very little of it has survived to the present day.

However, an unforeseen difficulty suddenly presents itself: social development in the countries inhabited by agricultural peoples emerges in an asynchronous manner, occurring both among peoples who have inherited an advanced ancient culture and among tribes living in virgin lands with no written language and primitive technology. In the 8th–10th centuries, whilst in Europe rapid feudalism and class formations developed, and crafts and agriculture became distinct from one another thanks to perfected technology, on the Eurasian steppes sheep grazed in the pastures, dogs guarded the flocks; and the shepherds, for their part,

9 In this work, the term ‘Eurasia’ refers to the interior of the continent, specifically the steppes between the Carpathians and Manchuria, which exhibit ethno-cultural unity. From an ethno-cultural perspective, the terms ‘Eastern Europe’ and ‘Western Eurasia’ should be borne in mind.

They were visiting their neighbours. The only tool they produced was the whip, and there was no need to improve it.

Admittedly, there were cities in Eurasia; but only along riverbanks. Consequently, people were living as nomads on the bare steppes, even to this day. Here, archaeological cultures succeeded one another; peoples emerged and vanished from history. In short, life continued, even if the primitive social structure remained at the stage of military democracy. What is meant by this?

In recent years, whilst attempts to explain the direction of this process have become widespread, the following postulate has been accepted without criticism or scrutiny: The cultural development of the peoples of the steppe and forest regions of Eurasia was said to be progressing 'from a nomadic way of life to urban life', and archaeology was following a path that suggested archaeological cultures were synonymous with ethnic groups.¹⁰ According to this principle of progressive development, the culture of the Saltovo-Maya archaeological culture is related to that of the Bulgar-Khazar people, who transitioned from a pastoral to a settled agricultural society following the gathering of a group of people, followed by the arrival of others who understood economic principles and joined them. Again, according to this view, following this stage, the poor came under the economic domination of the wealthy.¹¹

This speculative view contains the aforementioned description of the initial capital during the formation of the landlord system. There is no basis whatsoever for referring to such a process as the 'synthesis of feudal relations'. If that were the case, then, according to the authors' view, capitalism would have arisen not as a result of productive forces and the technological process, but because certain individuals, out of selfishness and for no apparent reason, temporarily adopted a complex agricultural culture—and in these regions, pomegranate cultivation, which generally requires the experience of many generations—whilst others, for some reason, had fallen into poverty due to their own incompetence.

It is an undisputed fact that a clan-based social structure existed among the ancient Khazars, Bulgars, Guz and Pechenegs. As is well known, in primitive societies, land is the common property of the clan and, consequently, of all members of the community. A clan member, as a result of an epidemic, famine or enemy raids, su-

10 Pletnéva, S. A. *From Nomads to Cities*. Moscow, 1967. Hereafter: Pletnéva, *From Nomads*.

11 Artamonov, M. I., Pletnéva, S. A. *Once Again on the Steppe Culture of Eurasia// Peoples of Asia and Africa*. 1970. Vol. 3, p. 92.

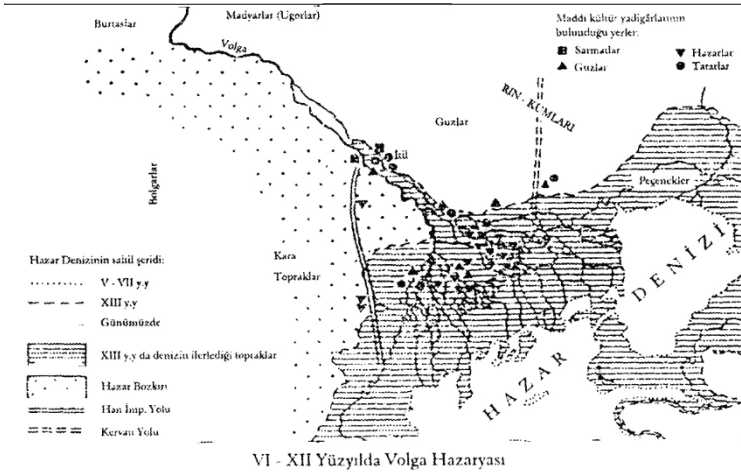
If he lost his status, he was entitled to receive assistance from his clan without having to provide anything in return. Consequently, personal poverty could not exist among these peoples. The wealth of some rulers, however, consisted not of capital, but rather of possessions such as earrings, necklaces, valuable weapons, and fabrics made of silk or brocade.¹² In societies where money was not used, there was no system of lending at interest; nor was there any need for such a thing in natural economies. It follows, then, that in the First Millennium, the level of productive capacity and the opportunities offered by natural resources were insufficient for the development of capitalism, even at the outset. Every member of society viewed the accumulation of wealth as a meaningless and dishonourable pursuit; anyone who attempted to exert pressure on their fellow tribesmen was regarded as a traitor and was either killed or exiled. Yet M. I. Artamonoff himself notes that privileged Jewish merchants, who relied on mercenaries and deprived the khan of his freedom and sovereignty, transformed Khazaria into a class-based state.¹³ In reality, the events of the 9th century had no connection whatsoever with the settled way of life of the nomads.

In essence, there was no question of a transition to any settled way of life. As agriculture and nomadic pastoralism coexisted in earlier periods, the ethnic groups had developed an ability to adapt to the natural environment.¹⁴ It could be said that these groups were changing as technology advanced; however, in this instance, they were also influencing the geographical environment by creating anthropogenic landscapes—that is, by establishing large cities. But an archaeologist cannot easily determine when such a thing occurred. Yet in Khazaria, they were building fortresses and markets for the purpose of conducting transit trade, without altering the nature of the steppe and river valleys.

12 Artamonov, *Xazar*, p. 99.

13 Ibid., pp. 457–458. In an article co-authored with S. A. Pletnéva, M. I. Artamonoff contradicts and even denies the views he had previously expressed in his own book; for instance, his assertion that the war between the Khazars and the Bulgars indicates that they were distinct ethnic groups, along with other points, is rather peculiar. I cannot make sense of these oddities.

14 Gumilëv, L. N., Erdeyi, Ī. *Unity and Diversity of Nomadic Culture in the Middle Ages*//Peoples of Asia and Africa. 1969. Vol. 3, pp. 78–87.



Son olarak, Hazarlar'la Bolgarlar'ın özdeşleştirilmesi, bu iki etnosun arkeolojik, yani maddî kültür yönünden aynı olduğu şeklindeki ispat edilmemiş bir görüşe dayanmaktadır. Tıpkı seramiğin Saltovo-Mayats kültürünün en belli başlı örneği olarak gösterilmesi gibi, eski insanlar da kap kakak kırıklarının mütemmimi olarak görülmektedir. Yani insanlar ve eşyalar “aynı düzenin maddesi”dirler.¹⁵ Yazarlarımızın mantığı, kap kakakların incelenmeye daha müsait olduğu şeklinde, kural tanımayan öylesine bir mantıktır. Halbuki, kap kakaklar yeryüzünde mevcuttur ve görülebilir; ama eski insanlar çürüyüp gitmiştir. Bir parça kap kakakla bu kadar uğraştığımız yeter. Hayal edebileceğimiz başka şeyler de var.

For example, let us suppose for a moment that, in the 20th century, an archaeologist was conducting excavations in the Leningrad region. By examining the pottery he found, he classified it into groups such as the ‘clay pot culture’, ‘porcelain culture’, ‘aluminium plate culture’ and ‘plastic plate culture’. He would also label the dwellings he uncovered as Empire-style palaces, brick houses and prefabricated buildings. According to the current rule, he would be obliged to interpret these dwellings as the legacies of peoples specific to that particular region. This example applies to a city with a history of just 250 years!

Without taking into account the peoples’ lifestyles—that is, their relationship with the nature that sustains them—and their tastes, worldviews, and traditions, which change from era to era according to the rigid rules of ethnogenesis, and focusing solely on ceramic types, he classifies them as ethnic

15 Artamonov, M. 1., Pletneva, S.A. Age., p. 9.

Is it correct to make such a diagnosis? No; every scientific discipline has its own field and boundaries. Archaeology deals with ‘the corpses of objects’, that is, artefacts. Where fabrics and furs have rotted away, and gold jewellery has been melted down in crucibles by enemies, the archaeologist is powerless. Another approach must be sought.

4. Stages of Ethnogenesis in Western Eurasia

Our own study¹⁶ has shown that the ethnic history of humanity consists of a series of discrete processes—that is, ethnogeneses that have left their mark on the historical canvas through analogous processes that occurred earlier in any region of interest to the researcher. For example, in Eastern Europe and the western parts of the Great Steppe adjacent to it, during the period illuminated by written history, many peoples succeeded one another. The Scythians, who were driven out by the Sarmatians, had lived in this region from the 8th century BC to the 3rd century BC. From the 3rd century BC to the 4th century AD, or more precisely until 370, the steppes east of the Don River were inhabited by the Sarmatians. The Goths, meanwhile, lived on the right bank of the Dnieper. The Huns, however, arrived in the vicinity of the Don in 371, drove a portion of the Goths across the Danube in 376, and had occupied Pannonia by around 420. However, they too were slaughtered by the Gepids in 454, the Bulgars in 463, and the Byzantines in 469; thus, dominance over the steppes around the Black Sea passed to the Bulgars. The fate of the Huns is a typical example of how any ethnic process can be disrupted by unforeseeable political conflicts. The Huns might have won the battles they fought against the Gepids off the coast of Nedao in 453 or against the Saragurs (Bulgars) in 463. In that case, a powerful Hun state would have been established in Eastern Europe in the 5th century. But since this did not happen, the numerous indigenous peoples gained their independence. Among them were the Dulebs, the descendants of the Ants living in Volhynia. The Arab geographer al-Masudi, who wrote his work around the 930s, wrote the following lines: “One of these (Slavic) tribes had a state in earlier times. The name of their ruler was Macak. The tribe itself was also known as the Valilane (i.e. ‘Volhynian’s’). This tribe held a respected position amongst its own tribes and its supremacy was acknowledged.”¹⁷

16 The author’s work *Ethnogenesis and the Earth’s Biosphere*.

17 Garkavi, A. Ya. *Tales of Jewish Writers about the Khazars and the Khazar Kingdom*. St Petersburg, 1874, p. 135. Hereafter: Garkavi, *Tales*.

The Bulgars had not managed to establish a unified state. The easterners in the Kuban basin—the Uturgurs—and the westerners between the Don and the Lower Danube,

-The Kuturgurs- were at odds with one another and thus fell victim to the newcomers from the east. The Kuturgurs came under the rule of the Avars (or, more accurately, the Pseudo-Avars or Chionites), whilst the Uturgurs came under Turkic rule between 558 and 574. The Danube River was also recognised as the border between the Avars and the Western Turks. The Avars, who settled in Pannonia, were the natural enemies of the Slavs from 668 onwards. The details of these prolonged conflicts are not reflected in the sources, as the events took place far from Byzantium and Gaul, where official records were kept. However, according to some fragmentary information that has survived, the Avars captured the Greek fortress of Sir-miya on the Danube (near Belgrade) in 581, and subsequently plundered the Balkan Peninsula (583–587). From 588 to 631, the Avars won victory after victory, inflicting torment upon the Dulebs (an East Slavic tribe); around the year 600, they had also settled in Inner Noricum alongside the Slavic Hortuns. In 619–620, the Avars, allied with the Persians, advanced as far as the Byzantine walls; however, they were repelled. The Avars' attempt to secure a victory against the Greeks in 627 also ended in a catastrophic defeat; as a result, the Bulgar tribes—that is, the small number of Avars who had been deployed to the front lines by the Ants, allies of the Romans but enemies of the Bulgars, in the wars against the Ants—the Kuturgurs, who lived on the steppes stretching from the Carpathians to the Don—had revolted.¹⁸

In those years, such a ruthless war was raging on the northern borders of the Avar Khaganate that new towns were emerging, destroyed and abandoned by the local population. (For example, the town of Pastr). In 631, when the Avars brutally suppressed the Kuturgur revolt, the remnants of the Kuturgurs joined forces with the Uturgurs in 633. However, when the Uturgurs were defeated in 670 by the Khazars, who had brought the North Caucasus under their control, the Bulgars dispersed, and thus the Tverians and Ulichians settled in the former lands of the Kuturgurs.

All these events had exhausted the power of the Avars, who had ruled the Eastern Carpathian steppes in the 6th century. Thus, the Avar Khaganate collapsed in the 8th century. But why? After all, the Avars or Obri were merely warriors

18 Çiçerov, I. S. *Byzantine Historical Writings*. 'Chronography' of Theophanes. Moscow, 1980, p. 58. Dn. 197, p. 96.

19 Braychevsky, Ryci, p. 172.

No, they were cultured people as well. Their diplomatic and administrative skills were of a standard that met the demands of the time. The Kangars or Pechenegs, who lived in the steppes around the Aral Sea, were naturally their allies. Nevertheless, they had fled from the Turks, who were not particularly numerous, had been repelled before the walls of Constantinople, and had been defeated by the Slavic state of Samo. This was no coincidence.²⁰

Let us take a look at history. Up until the 4th century BC, the Aryan tribes of Central Asia and Iran formed a threatening and aggressive bloc. On the eve of the 6th and 5th centuries BC, the exiled Zoroaster had begun his struggle against the old gods, the devas. The Indus peoples, the Hellenes, the Scandinavians and the Celts paid no heed to his words; yet his propaganda had struck a deep chord across the steppes of Central Asia. Thus, whilst those who embraced this new doctrine became Iranians, those who continued to believe in the old gods remained Turanians.

The ancient peoples of Central Asia—the Sogdians, Parthians, the true Abars (the ‘aba’ of Jungaria), the Hephthalites, the Hionites and the Kangars—had reached the final juncture of their existence, and even those who had taken refuge in the Carpathians were doomed to the same fate. These heirs of Old Turan, who stood at the pinnacle of savagery, were regarded as enemies by the Slavs.

The fate of the Turks was even more dreadful. By the mid-8th century, some had been physically eradicated in their own homeland, whilst others had met the same fate in China, where they had sought refuge in the hope of survival. Yet these people had left a glorious legacy to many peoples: a renowned name, a noble tradition of warfare, and a passionate gene pool sufficient to sustain numerous steppe populations.

The trait of passionerlik [sign] transmitted through reproduction is no different from the trait that arises through mutation. The only difference is that during genetic drift, the trait of passionerlik spreads more rapidly, and consequently the process proceeds more intensively. For this reason, the incubation period of Hazar ethnogenesis was completed in three generations, that is, in approximately 70 years, after which the term ‘Turko-Hazar’ became established; however, this too lost its meaning after 650, as the term ‘Hazar’ came to be applied to mixed-origin individuals of Turkic-Hazar descent. For some reason, Istahri and other Eastern geographers divide the Khazars into two groups: dark-skinned,²¹ black

20 Gumilev, *Ethnogenesis*, Vol. IV, 1987, pp. 208–215.

21 Those referred to as “red-haired” in Khazaria. (See Zaxoder, B. N., **Kaspiyskiy svod sve-deni y o Vostochnoy Yevrope**. 2 vols. Vol. I, Moscow, 1962, p. 138. Hereafter: Zaxoder, **Kaspiyskiy svod**).

those with hair and those described as “white, handsome and of perfect appearance”.²² These authors sometimes attribute the Khazars to the Turks, and sometimes trace their origins to the Georgians or Armenians, thereby classifying them as non-Turkic peoples.²³ According to Istahri, the Khazar language belongs neither to Turkish, nor to Persian, nor to any other known language group. However, it resembles Bulgarian.²⁴ This latter view is rather surprising. For the Bulgarian language is, in fact, a Turkic language. But was this also the case when the Turks first arrived in the Povolye region in the 5th–6th centuries? Doubtful!

The Turkish language, as an international and common tongue, was only able to spread in the 11th century thanks to the Polovtsians, who drove the ancient Rus’ people—who had dominated the steppes in the 10th and 11th centuries—out of that region.²⁵ Until that period, the peoples spoke their own languages, the nature of which we do not know; however, they also knew the Old Turkic spoken by the Turkic commanders.

Thus, in the 7th century in the Lower Volga region, optimal conditions for ethnogenesis existed: intertwined landscapes with distinct characteristics that met the peoples’ productive needs; ethnic substrates belonging to the Eurasian super-ethnos; and imported elements that facilitated the emergence of ethnic differences within the social system. This latter factor was sufficiently flexible to allow the ethnic groups it facilitated to develop into sub-ethnic groups of the Khazar people, who inherited their names from their ancestors.

Herein lies the explanation for why M. I. Artamonoff doubted the accuracy of the Armenian chronicles mentioning the presence of the Khazars in the 3rd century.²⁶ The ethnonym was the same, but the ethnos was different. Yet such occurrences were not uncommon.

The phase of ethnic rise lasted for approximately 150 years, from the mid-7th century to the late 8th century. During this period, the Khazars went from victory to victory and maintained fairly good relations with their neighbours. However, these relations took various forms and led to a deviation from the normal ethnogenesis curve, resulting in the failure of the akmatic phase to emerge. For this reason, we must first examine the Khazars’

22 Ibid., p. 137.

23 Ibid., p. 135.

24 Ibid., p. 135.

25 Kunik, A., Razen, V. *Reports by Al-Bekri and other authors on Rus and the Slavs*. Vol. I. St Petersburg, 1878, p. 54.

26 Artamonov, *The Khazars*, p. 116.

We shall take a look at their neighbours; but first, let us recall that in the 3rd–4th centuries, the Khazar people were in a phase of homeostasis. The Khazars' productive forces were stable; however, society was in a primitive social formation, deprived of productive relations. Yet this situation did not prevent the Khazars from existing or from defending their homeland against their rather unpeaceful neighbours.

5. Between Mountains and Seas

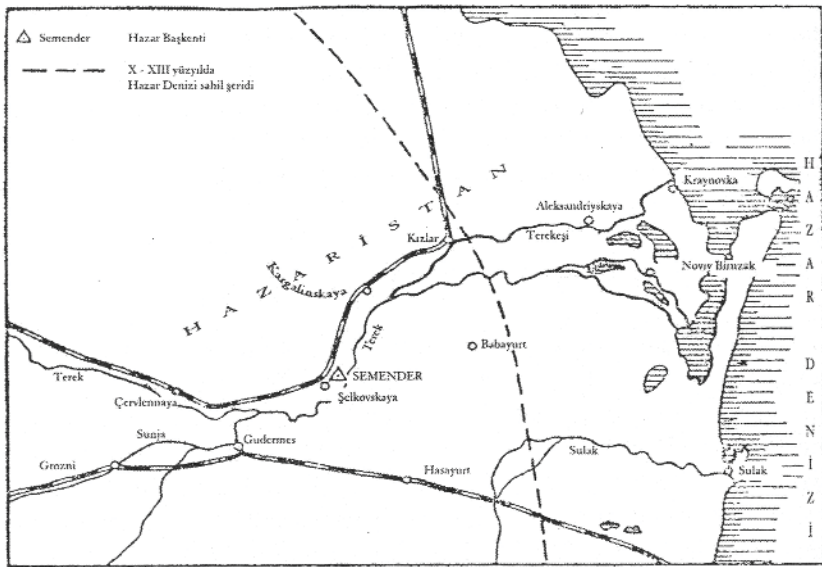
Up to now, the Volga Khazaria, or the 'Aral Sea Netherlands', has been within our field of vision. Yet the Khazars had long held sway in the valleys of Dagestan, between the Terek and Sulak rivers. Archaeological studies conducted between 1967 and 1980 revealed that the Khazars lived on the northern shores of the Terek and in the section of the Caspian Sea between the Terek and Sulak estuaries. Credit for these findings goes to G. S. Fédoroff, who made the information available to the author of these lines in 1966.²⁷ It is certain that these ceramics bear a resemblance to those found in the Volga delta.

Conversely, the mountainous and steppe regions of Dagestan were not inhabited by the Khazars. Perhaps the Khazars exerted some influence over them, but according to A.V. Gadlo's view, this influence was imported from outside and bore traces of the Gothic style.²⁸ We must accept this view. The town of Hazar-Kala was a fortress of Serir, which was occasionally occupied by the Khazars. This town is situated on the edge of a broad road leading into the interior of Dagestan. By contrast, the other passes are inaccessible due to the powerful rivers flowing between them, and consequently, they could not be adequately defended. In short, the land here was limited; however, this was not a problem in the Khazar settlements along the coast. The sea level was lower in the 5th–8th centuries. The water level was –34 m, i.e. 6 m lower than in the 20th century. Consequently, the sea did not cause concern for those settled along the coast.²⁹

27 Fédorov, G. S. *Excavations in Northern Dagestan* // *Archaeological Discoveries of 1967*. Moscow, 1968, p. 92. Hereafter: Fédorov, *Excavations*.

28 Gadlo, A. V. *The Ethnic History of the North Caucasus, 4th–10th Centuries AD*, 1979, pp. 202–203.

29 Gumilev, L. N. *Khazaria and the Caspian* (Landscape and Ethnos. I) // *Vestnik LGU*. 1964, No. 6, pp. 82–95.



VII - XII Yüzyılda Terek Hazaryası (Bugünkü yer isimleriyle)

In the following century, as the flat shores north of the Caspian Sea were submerged, the steppes of Dagestan ceased to be safe regions. This was because the water level of the advancing Caspian Sea had dropped to -18 m, and even the town of Babayurt remained at sea level. In other words, the water level was 12 m higher than the Caspian's level in the 13th–14th centuries. Flooding occurred only in the lower reaches of the Volga.

The 10th century was a period marked by major upheavals not only among the Russians (their baptism), in the Caliphate (the capture of Baghdad by the Daylamites) and in China (the reunification of the country under the Song dynasty), but also in the northern steppes of the Caspian and Aral Seas. The century-long severe drought that ravaged the steppe regions of Eurasia in the 10th century had weakened the nomadic Pechenegs and Guzes, who had taken control of the steppe. The rain and snow that had fallen in the regions beyond the Urals and on the shores of the Aral Sea had, by the 9th century, quietly shifted northwards to the banks of the Oka and Kama. There, numerous marshes had formed, and streams had burst their banks and foamed. The Volga, meanwhile, swelled every spring until the 10th century—

30 Gumilev, L. N. *The Discovery of Khazaria*, pp. 55–70; same author: *The History of the Fluctuations in the Level of the Caspian Sea over 2000 Years (from the 4th century BCE to the 16th century CE)* // *Fluctuations in the Humidity of the Aral-Caspian Region during the Holocene*. Moscow, 1980, pp. 32–47.

was carrying water to the Caspian Sea, which sustained the steppe. However, as cyclones shifted further north towards the White Sea basin, where Viking ships could easily navigate, the rise in the Caspian's water level ceased.³¹ Yet this was no cause for celebration for the steppe dwellers. For the lakes where they had long grazed their sheep had dried up, the water from the springs where they watered their horses had receded, and the snow that once nourished the insatiable soil no longer fell. Now the water level had begun to fall, the lake waters had become thoroughly polluted, and the fish—a vital food source for the northerners—could no longer survive in these waters. In this harsh 10th century, nature had brought its full, merciless fury down upon the people of the region.

However, the water level of the Caspian Sea in the 10th century remained at approximately the same level as in the 20th century. It only reached a height of 18 metres in the 13th–14th centuries; however, as neither the Khazar Khaganate nor the Khazar people existed there by then, this did not affect their relationship with the surrounding region. The Khazar Khaganate had already been overthrown by the Russian prince Svyatoslav in the 10th century. The Khazar people, meanwhile, split into two groups: Christians (the Terek Cossacks) and Muslims (the Astrakhan Tatars). The descendants of the Khazars had managed to survive, but their ethnic system had ceased to exist. In Dagestan, the factor leading to this situation was not the sea's advance inland, but rather a complex ethno-political situation: Arab expansionism, the migration of Jews from Iran to this region, the cultural influence of the Agvanya Armenians, and so on. Consequently, the Caspian Sea's advance inland held no significance in Khazar history.

It is necessary to shed some light on this problem, which stands out within a reasonable perspective. The people of the region have settled here to the extent that current economic conditions have allowed. Dagestan, covered in fertile plains, is bordered to the north by the Terek Valley, to the east by the Caspian Sea, and to the west by mountain ranges and foothills that are not particularly high; beyond this range lies the mountainous region of Dagestan. In the vicinity of the Caspian Sea, particularly during periods when the humidity of the steppe region increased, it was difficult to find areas suitable for nomadic pastoralism, agriculture and fishing. Consequently, the fertile plains of Dagestan faced a high population density.³²

31 Gumilëv, L. N. *Vikingi nye solgali*/Priroda, 1977. No. 5, pp. 95–99.

32 Fédorov, Ya. A., Fédorov, G. S. *The Early Turks in the North Caucasus* (Historical and Ethnographic Essays). Moscow, 1978, pp. 142–143.

By the first century AD, the Sarmatian-Alans had settled in the North Caucasus; however, they were gradually ceding control of the region to the Khazars, Turks and Sabirs (Savians). The latter were part of the people comprising the Huns; however, whilst retaining political dominance, they had become assimilated among the Barsils, who constituted the indigenous population of these fertile regions. The Hunno-Savir ruler held the title of 'elte-ber' and was a vassal of the Khazar khan.³³ The descendants of the Alans, who left behind numerous archaeological relics for posterity, were under his rule.³⁴ It seems there was no room left for another people to settle.

Of course, this prosperous country was in a position to support political refugees, such as the Jewish immigrants who arrived from Iran in the 6th century, even if their numbers were not particularly large. However, a difficult historical period had to be endured before their descendants could multiply and establish a territory of their own. The Arab invasion of the 8th century had plunged the country into a century of conflict between Derbent and Semender (Samandar).

Villages were burned, cities plundered, and castles razed to the ground; the people living there were either slaughtered or taken captive.³⁵ The country was depopulated, and thus an opportunity arose for a new ethnic group to come and settle on the vacant lands.

In this way, we can explain how socio-political events (wars), demographic events (migration) and ecological events (the colonisation of vacant ecological niches) influence one another reciprocally and spatially. However, we must note that the Arabs' military campaign was the result of a natural phenomenon (mutation) driven by a passionate impulse—one rooted in socio-cultural traditions stemming from Arab-Islamic cultures, and containing elements such as greed and the lust for money. The other 'passioners' driven by this impulse were no less aggressive. For instance, the Rajputs were by no means inferior to the Arabs, yet they had overthrown a despotic regime. The Turks (Turkuts) had filled their coffers to the brim with the spoils from their expeditions to distant lands. The Tabgach did not take prisoners after victory; nor did their state officials know the meaning of mercy. Although the source of energy was the same, it exerted its influence in different ways, unconstrained by existing traditions.

³³ Ibid., p. 149.

³⁴ Ibid., pp. 154–155.

³⁵ Ibid., pp. 173–174.

However, not all conquerors were passionate. The Khazars and Bulgars were in a phase of homeostasis. Nevertheless, they possessed greater energy reserves than peoples in a phase of obscurity (such as the Persians) or experiencing a temporary decline (such as the Greeks). Consequently, throughout history, we observe not the absolute dimensions of passionate tension, but its relative significance as it emerged during ethnic encounters.

Having noted this, let us move on to another topic and review the distribution of ethnic cohesion towards the end of the 8th century.

6. West

The axis of passionate impulse that led to the occurrence of many major events stretched from southern Sweden (Gothia) through Central Europe to the regions of the Carpathians, Dacia, Asia Minor, Cilicia and Palestine, and from the Red Sea region as far as Abyssinia. The ethnic groups situated directly along this axis were plunged into such a stormy upheaval of change that, ultimately, unable to muster sufficient strength, they were destroyed in the conflicts they entered into with the organised system of the Roman Empire. The Dacians (Danes) and the Jews of Palestine fell victim to this fate.³⁶ So, who were those who remained at home, merely expanding but not altering their territory? These were the Slavs. The ancestors of the Slavs, who emerged within the 'passioner' eruption zone in the 1st century, split into two groups by the 4th century: the Venedi and the Ants. By the 7th century, both groups had pushed the Vandals towards the shores of the Baltic Sea, spread as far as the Adriatic Sea where they intermingled with the descendants of the warrior Illyrians, and Slavicised the Thracians, Macedonians and a portion of the Hellenes in the Balkans and even the Peloponnese. In the east, they spread as far as the Dnieper, and only one group extended as far north as Lake Ilmen (Novgorod in Slovene). We have no grounds to believe that this expansion was the result of a demographic explosion. No, the conquerors married women they had chosen from among the captives, and their children adopted their ancestors' language. Consequently, although their descendants would have understood the 'Slovene language' without any difficulty until the 11th century, the Slavic tribes were now very

36 Veber, G. *General History*, Vol. IV, p. 814. Hereafter: Veber, *General History*.

They bore little resemblance to one another. As there were two powerful ethnic groups among them—the Bulgars and the Savirs [Sabirs]—the Slavs and the Khazars had never come into contact with one another. (The Polans, later ^{known} as the ‘Russ’, shared a border with the Savirs). The chronicler explains that the Rus’ constituted a new historical phenomenon that replaced the disintegrating federation of the Polans.³⁸ Let us add that the term ‘Polan’ is not an ethnic designation, since the Slavic-speaking peoples under the rule of the Ants were called Dulebs or Volhynians. The Polans were found not only on the banks of the Dnieper [Dnepr/Özü], but also in Moravia, Slavic Bulgaria and the upper reaches of the Vistula. This indicates that, at that time, the term “Polan” was used to refer to the “ispolin” – the giant.³⁹ Conversely, “Ros” also, It is an ethnonym dating from the 4th century, described by Jordanes—who chronicled Gothic history in the 6th century—as the ‘treacherous people of the Rossomons’⁴⁰, because they had aided the Huns in defeating the Goths. The Ants, allies of the Rossomons and the Huns—that is, a group that split ^{from the Rossomons}⁴¹ but, by the 10th century, in the strict sense of the term, had merged into a single ethnic group –Rus–.

Let us move on to a generalisation. The more powerful the ‘passioner’ mutation, the closer it is to the driving forces that push ethnic groups towards the borders of new territories. The more tragic the consequences of this mutation, the stronger the ethnic group’s cultural tradition becomes. Both are understandable phenomena. Ethnic groups situated on the periphery of the driving force gradually undergo the passionate ascent and act without dismantling the existing structure

37 “... the Polians... today they are also called Russians” (PVL . H. z, p. 21).

38 Brayčevskiy, *Ryci*, pp. 149–164.

39 Ribakov, B. A. *The Ancient Rus’// Soviet Archaeology*. Vol. X, 1953, p. 47. Although this word was later supplanted by a Turkish equivalent, ‘bahadır’, its feminine form, ‘polanit-sa’, has been preserved in the oldest songs. (See Balashov, D. M. “Dunai”. *The Historical Life of Folk Poetry // Russian Folklore*. Vol. XVI, 1976, p. 100). Consequently, Polyan is not the name of a tribe or social class, but a psychological type brought forth by the unrecorded age of victories of the Slavic passivists.

40 See *Jordanes*, p. 91.

41 The Rossomons should not be confused with the Roxolani. (See Gumilev, L. N. *Tales of the Khazar Tribute*, p. 169, note 43).

42 Brayčevskiy, M. Yu. *The Origins of the Ryci*, p. 155.

They succeed in altering their established patterns. However, if the structure is amorphous, a rapid and sudden rupture is not required for its reorganisation. This explains why the Franks, Saxons and Lombards, who began their historical trajectory during the homeostatic phase, formed relatively stable ethno-social communities. For they had derived their passionate energy not directly, but from half-transmitted signs [sign]. For this reason, whilst the Goths, Vandals, Gepids and Burgundians drove their own passions into the arms of death, squandering their passion, they emerged onto the historical stage in the late 5th century. In both the 'Gothic period' and the ethnic groups that emerged thereafter, the period of active formation begins at the breaking point, that is, the stage of gradual decline. The fanatical Merovingians who emerged in the 6th century replaced the 'weak kings' in the 7th century. After defeating the British Celts, the Angles, Saxons and Jutes established seven rival kingdoms, but were unable to complete the conquest of the island. The Lombards, by dividing their kingdom into duchies, became easy prey for the Franks. The Germans preferred to divide the country into tribal administrations at the expense of weakening central authority. Europe, By the early 8th century, it had become a weak and harmless 'Wild West' for its eastern neighbours, the Slavs. And this was to be expected. During the first 160 years of the Passioner system's incubation period, it became apparent that the older ethnic groups were being renewed. Over the period spanning from 155 to 400, as the ascent of Passionerism reached the extreme fever pitch of the akmatic phase, every people began to fight against everyone else—worse still, everyone began to fight against everyone else. Those who benefited from this phase were the Huns of Munzük [Muncuk] and Attila, who seized dominance in Europe. However, they too paid the price for this with the defeat at Nedao in 453, and were mercilessly slaughtered. The Huns were now gone. From the late 5th century onwards, a decline in the passionate tensions of ethnic systems can be observed, which is hardly surprising. For we now understand that half of ethnic life had already been lived out, and no attempt had even been made to rebuild it. There is no phase of inertia during this period; for a foreign environment, even in a fertile country like Italy, cannot sustain life. The Goths and Vandals lived at the expense of the conquered indigenous peoples and, by imitating them, entered a phase of obscurity. Thus, after 5–8 centuries had passed since their emergence, they would be erased from history. For the phase of collapse is a disease that progresses very slowly, and no ethnic group can overcome it.

Conversely, the Byzantine Empire that emerged as a result of this impetus, being the equal of the 'barbarian' peoples, would enter a phase of stagnation and yet astonish the entire world with its splendour. Its golden radiance would continue to illuminate the world for another three centuries, until its potential was squandered and it faded away. Nevertheless, Byzantium managed to survive for 1,500 years by pushing the boundaries. Despite the blows dealt from both outside and within, where did Byzantium find the strength that enabled it to stand firm? Spiritual strength and sound judgement saved Byzantium from destruction at the critical breaking point. We now refer to the Byzantines as 'Greeks' in accordance with linguistic principles; yet in reality, alongside the Greeks in Constantinople, there lived Goths, Isaurians, Slavs, Armenians, Paphlagonians, Illyrians and Arabs, all actively contributing to daily life. The finest, most passionate people were leaving their homelands to flock to the capital. These people, brought together by the strong Orthodox system, protected the empire as if it were their own state. For their ancestors were not viewed as savage mountain dwellers or pirates, but rather as saints who had suffered martyrdom in the early days of Christianity. They had preserved their traditions as a precious part of their lives. This is why the Byzantines outlived all their peers, with the exception of the Eastern Slavs.

II. MUSLIM SUPER- IC ETHNOS

7. The Emergence of the Arabs in the .

The Arabian Peninsula has been inhabited since ancient times by ethnic groups speaking various dialects of the ancient Semitic language. However, during the period of interest to us (the 5th–6th centuries), there was no ethnic, social, cultural, or even political unity.¹ Consequently, these peoples lacked ethnic consciousness and were unfamiliar with the term ‘Arab’.² As far as can be seen, they were the remnants of ancient peoples who had reached the stage of homeostasis—that is, establishing a natural balance with the habitable landscapes of the country—during their historical existence.

The impetus of the late 5th and early 6th centuries triggered an intense process of ethnogenesis that paved the way for the integration of these remnant ethnic groups. Consequently, violent inter-tribal clashes—such as the wars between the Banu Asad and the Banu Kind—the development of poetry, and the adoption of religious systems distinct from those of Byzantium and Iran followed one another in succession. The ancient cult of star worship [Sabianism] was preserved only amongst the Bedouins of Central Arabia. In the oases of the Hijaz and Yemen, however, various branches of Christianity and Judaism had spread.

It is understandable that systems reflecting foreign worldviews should exert the greatest influence not on people at the level of inertia—where the impulse of passion and instinct are one and the same—but on the passionate. However, these passionate individuals were also the sort who took no interest in philosophical matters. On the contrary, they were occupied with more pressing matters such as engaging in trade, raiding caravans, and occasionally serving as mercenaries in Byzantium (the Ghassanids) or Iran (the Lahmids). Greed, just like fanaticism, was a mode of passion.

1 Müller, A. *History of Islam*. Vol. I. St Petersburg, 1895, pp. 24–28.

2 *Islam*. Moscow, 1984, p. 129 ff.

The incubation period of Arab ethnogenesis had lasted approximately 100 years.

By the early 7th century, religious tensions had escalated to such an extent that original communities capable of forming social structures and establishing doctrinal beliefs had begun to emerge. Islam, propagated by Muhammad—who, whilst tending camels in Mecca, claimed to have received a revelation from Allah—was one such community. Indeed, his devotion, his refusal to pursue personal ambition, and his extreme self-sacrifice had drawn some Arabs—the first Muhajirun—to his side. However, their alignment with Muhammad had also provoked the enmity of others, particularly the wealthy of Mecca and Abu Sufyan of the Banu Umayya nobility, as well as many poets and Bedouins. Nevertheless, in the end, Muhammad and the Ansar who stood by him emerged victorious from this struggle, forcing the Meccans and the Bedouins to accept Islam. Subsequently, they established a state that brought the entire Peninsula under its rule. Thus, the consortium had grown first at the sub-ethnic level, and later at the ethnic level.

The truth is that both the Meccans and the Bedouins were hypocritical in their acceptance of Islam. Indeed, as soon as the Bedouins heard of the Prophet's death in 632, they immediately apostatised. The Prophet's father-in-law and first caliph, Abu Bakr, succeeded in suppressing the apostates. However, the Meccans, having retained control of key and lucrative posts, were benefiting from the formation of the state. They joined forces with the fanatical Muslims led by Caliph Umar to wage war against the Byzantines and the Persians. In these joint wars waged for the sake of religion and plunder, an 'Arab' ethnic group took shape.³ All were Muslims. Some were sincere, others hypocritical. In 656, the 'sincere' ones and the fanatics began fighting amongst themselves.⁴ Although the 'hypocrites' emerged victorious from this war in 661, they preserved the Islamic faith, which served as the cement uniting the emerging Arab ethnic group under the green Umayyad banner.

The Umayyad dynasty's fiercest enemies were, once again, Arabs; these consisted partly of supporters of the legitimate Caliph Ali's grandchildren, and partly of fanatics who espoused monarchist doctrines. The first group—

³ Agy.

⁴ The enemies of Islam and the sincere Muslims were so passionate that this situation eventually led to a civil war between the Kharijites (supporters of the Prophet's son-in-law Ali) and the Umayyads, who were known in Islamic history as the "hypocrites".

The former adopted the name “Shi’a” and adopted a white banner. The latter were called “Kharijites”. Their banners, however, were red.

Despite being divided into numerous groups and different sects, the Arab tribes had managed to integrate into a single ethnic group. When the Kaysis – the Northern Arabs – and the Kelbis – the Southern Arabs – fought against the Persians and the Byzantines in Iran or Syria, they set aside their past disputes and stood shoulder to shoulder to put the infidels to the sword. Even during expeditions to distant lands, Bedouins who could not even bear to look at one another back home would become friends with the people of Mecca and Yemen. Military camps in Kufa, Basra (in Mesopotamia), Kairouan (in North Africa) and similar locations had become the centres of formation for the new Arab ethnos, where the old tribal bonds had lost their meaning. But it was not only Arabs who lived in these military settlements.

The magnificent victories won in the East and West had extended the borders of the Caliphate as far as the Pamir and Pyrenees. Many tribes and peoples had joined the Caliphate and embraced Islam. Thus, the Muslim super-ethnos [the Islamic ummah] had come into being, and only a socio-political system could hold this vast structure together. Whilst the conquered peoples accepted Islamic traditions, they adapted them to their own customs and inclinations. This situation, which applied to the Persians, Berbers and Turks, also held true for the Arabs and, in particular, the Bedouins. Just as the Guelphs had fought the Ghibellines in Europe, so too in the Islamic world, the Shiites—supporters of Caliph Ali, who had been killed by the Khawarij—had taken up arms against the Sunni Caliph, who corresponded more to the Pope than to a ruler. Opposing them were groups representing the Sunni viewpoint. However, both sides could unite without hesitation to defend Islam against external enemies such as Christians, infidels and fire-worshippers. Nevertheless, this sense of unity could not eliminate internal hostilities. However, the power of aggression had scarcely diminished, and this was significant for all the caliph’s enemies, including the Khazars.

Having conquered Iran in 650 and Armenia in 654, the Arabs had assumed the role previously played by the Sasanian dynasty beyond the Caucasus. The wars waged against the Byzantines in the mountains and plains of Asia Minor and upon the foaming waves of the Mediterranean continued unabated

. The initial victories (634–642) had brought Syria, Mesopotamia and Egypt under the Caliphate's rule. The Umayyads, who subsequently took up the banner, conquered Carthage in 698, Spain in 711–712, and Aquitaine thereafter. These rapid victories achieved by the 'hypocritical' Muslim Arabs also spread eastwards. In 661–662, the Arabs captured Agvanya and advanced as far as Derbent. By 644 they had reached the Punjab, and by 674–76 they had reached Sogdiana and the Horezm [Khwarezm] plain. Between 704 and 715, the Arab commander Qutayba conquered all the valleys of Central Asia. The Umayyads' green banner seemed poised to fly across the entire world within a short space of time.

However, a sudden and fierce wave of attack had been launched against them. In 717–718, the Arab fleet was set ablaze by Byzantine fire off the coast of Constantinople; the army, starved and hemmed in by the Byzantines, was forced to retreat, suffering heavy losses. Following this defeat, the Arabs had lost the initiative in their struggle against the Byzantines.

In 732, Charles Martel, having assembled an army of Franks, halted the Arabs at Poitiers. The battles between the Arabs and the Franks, which took place on the northern slopes of the Pyrenees, continued for a long time and did not end until the Arabs withdrew beyond those mountains. From 718 onwards, Austria, which had become a perpetual threat to the Arabs of Spain, remained unconquered.

In 717, the Türgiș [Türgeş] khan Sulu maintained the peace and alliance with the Tang Empire against the Arabs. Although Tibet was an enemy of China, the Türgiș were able to continue the attacks they had launched against the Arabs until 736, thanks to Tibet's signing of a separate peace treaty with the Tang dynasty. It is difficult to determine whether there was any connection between these events and the war waged by the Khazars in the Caucasus, where they were part of a clearly anti-Arab coalition.

Historical sources from that period offer no explanation regarding the Khazars' eastern and western connections at the height of the Arab conquests. But is everything recorded in the sources? Consequently, the logic of events and chronological overlap suggest that the Türgiș Khanate, which had formed an alliance with the Tang Empire, was an ally of Khazaria and Byzantium; and that the Pechenegs, having freed themselves from the yoke of the Western Turkic Khaganate, acted in the Arabs' favour by cutting off the route stretching from Balhash to the Khazars,

The Pechenegs stood like a knife at the backs of the Khazars and the Türgiș, but they lost the war because they received no assistance from the Arabs.

The Umayyad Caliph possessed considerable military might compared to each of his enemies. This rapid rise not only provided the Umayyads with the means to launch military campaigns with ease, but also facilitated the incorporation of the conquered peoples. By that time, they had also incorporated the regular armies known as the Tajiks into their ranks. However, the system of mercenaries that came into play during the wars waged simultaneously on four fronts (including Spain) deprived the Caliphate of the opportunity to gain an advantage based on military strength. When we observe the simultaneous nature of the offensives launched by the Byzantines, the Türgiș, the Khazars and the mountain-dwelling Huttelans in the east, and the Franks in the west, we can easily conclude that this was no coincidence, but rather the existence of an anti-Islamic bloc supported by the Tang Empire.

From 717 onwards, the Sogdians waged wars against the Arabs, alternating between victories and defeats; however, when the Chinese fell out with the Türgiș in 737, the latter formed an alliance with the Tibetans and laid siege to the fortress of Kucha. Naturally, whilst this manoeuvre paralysed the Chinese armies, it also led to the isolation of Sogdiana. Although the Arab governor Nasr ibn Seyyar, who suppressed the final rebellion in 738, transformed Central Asia into an Islamic state, the Arabs were driven out of Asia Minor following the battle at Akroinon in 739.

It is highly unlikely that any regime would consider accepting the possibility of defeat in future wars. The Umayyads were not popular with the people in their own lands. Ali's monarchist supporters, the republican Kharijites, the subjugated Berbers, the plundered Persians, the Bedouins whose share of the spoils was confiscated during the division of the spoils, and the non-Muslims who paid the *jizya* tax to ensure their faith was not interfered with, all hated the Caliphs of Baghdad. Apart from the causes leading to discontent, one also needed the energy to fight, that is, a spirit of resistance.

The passionate were relatively few in number; yet the proportion of those who were conciliatory and advocated a middle course was exceedingly high. As they had not yet been crushed under the burden of taxation, they felt at ease and left the task of dying in the uprisings to the passionate. However, they owed this peace to the

. Those who realised that war sustained them rushed there to plunder the spoils and take slaves. Now that Sogdiana had been subdued, it was Hazarya's turn.

8. 's Invasion of Khazaria

It was clear that the forces of the Caliphate were no match for those of the Khazars. Furthermore, the greater part of Khazar territory consisted of arid steppes inhabited by hostile tribes. Having severed ties with their potential allies, the Turks and Türgiș, and even with former pagans, the Khazars were unable to establish close relations with Byzantium during the 7th and 8th centuries, as religious beliefs served as the indicator of diplomatic relations at that time. Despite having won a victory over the North Caucasian Bulgars and having seized the steppe regions of Crimea between 670 and 679, the Khazars had not secured their rear. Bulgar tribes arriving in the vicinity of the Danube and Kama rivers had threatened them from the west and north until the end of the 7th century.

Over the course of the following decade, the Arabs had brought not only Armenia and Georgia but also Agvania (in 693) and Lazica under their control; consequently, they had even seized the Derbent Pass. It was now time for the invasion of Khazaria.

The war was raging around Derbent. The Arabs had captured Derbent; however, they had lost this fortress in 711. In 713, the Arabs entered the 'Land of the Huns' (Northern Dagestan), where they tasted the bitterness of defeat; in 721, the Khazars invaded Armenia, but were defeated. Emerging victorious from the battles, the Arabs captured Derbent and Belencer (on the right bank of the Sulak River) and razed Semender (on the Terek, opposite the village of Shelkovskaya) to the ground. As the Alans had dealt a crushing blow to the Khazars, the Arabs achieved an easy victory. However, the Alans were to pay dearly for their actions. In 724–25, the Arabs, advancing via the Daryal Pass, attacked the Alans, defeated them and subjected them to the tribute system.

The following years were marked by Arab raids and Khazar counter-attacks. Moreover, the Arabs were forced to redeploy their forces to Asia Minor and Central Asia. The Khazars, too, were compelled to move their capital from the Terek

, where the city of Itil was founded.

The Jews living in the valleys between the Sulak and Terek rivers,⁵ and the Byzantines—who had become allies by marriage following the wedding of the Khazar princess Çiçek, who had taken the name Irina after being baptised by Emperor Constantine V—were fighting alongside the Khazars. The Georgians, who had rebelled against Arab rule in 735 but were brutally suppressed, had also provided some assistance. The Kingdom of Dagestan, too, had offered far less resistance to the Arabs than had been expected. The capable and ruthless Arab commander Mervan had captured the mountain fortresses one by one; by 736, having subjugated the Lekzi [Ilek] and the Alans, he had brought the war to Khazaria. By 737, the Arab armies had advanced as far as the right bank of the Volga River. Together with the auxiliary forces of the Armenian princes, this army numbered 150,000. In contrast to such a powerful force, the army mustered by the Khazars consisted of only 40,000 volunteers. The khan, having abandoned his army and his kingdom, fled to the mountains in the north; the Khazar army, meanwhile, turned towards the left bank of the fast-flowing Volga River, hoping it would serve as a good defensive barrier against the enemy.⁶

The Khazars were unaware of the engineering knowledge and expertise of the southern peoples. The Umayyads had recruited not only the Bedouins of Arabia—the Kays and the Kalb—but also the settled Arabs of the Hijaz, who, like the Turks and the Khazars, possessed primitive technology. Thanks to their conquest of the cultured nations of the Near East, although the cultural level of the raiding bands was not high, they had gained access to resources the Khazars did not possess. The magnificent culture recognised as Islamic civilisation emerged and developed after the Umayyad dictatorship—which had relied on the crude Bedouins allied with the Kays—was overthrown by the Persians, Syrians, Egyptians and the urban Arabs of Mesopotamia.

Mervan placed his trust in the capable engineers who had succeeded in building a pontoon bridge across the Volga. Thus, the finest soldiers of the Arab army crossed to the opposite bank via the newly constructed bridge and launched a sudden attack on the Khazar volunteers. Ten thousand Khazar soldiers were killed; seven thousand were taken prisoner; the remainder fled.

5 For further details on how the Jews came from the Near East to the Caucasus and Khazaria, see below.

6 For detailed information on these operations, see Artamonov, *Xazar*, pp. 202–225.

Realising he had lost the war, the Khazar khan offered a peace treaty and accepted the condition of converting to Islam. Marwan returned beyond the Caucasus with a vast amount of booty and 40,000 prisoners of war, whom the Arabs called the ‘Sakâlîbe’. These unfortunate souls had been taken prisoner near the “Slavyan” River, though it has not been established why this river was called the “Slavyan” River.⁷ It is surmised that this river was the Don River near present-day Kalach. When the prisoners reached a certain place, they rebelled, killed their commander, and were slaughtered by the Arabs who caught up with them whilst they were attempting to flee back to their homeland.

After defeating the Khazars, Mervan seized the state of Serir (in Dagestan) in 739 and, returning to Baghdad in 744, ascended the caliph’s throne; however, this famous general, who fought his less capable and less courageous enemies through deceit and treachery, would meet his end in 750.

9. The Unexpected Victory at

The great victories achieved by the Arabs had not been of much benefit. The people of Khazaria and Dagestan had preferred Christianity, which had spread amongst the urban population, to Islam. A contemporary Christian writer, when describing the Khazars, portrays them as a crude, savage, bloodthirsty, irreligious people, yet one that believed in a single Creator God.⁸ But this description is not entirely accurate. For the Khazars were more than sufficiently tolerant. Jews lived among the Khazars without any restrictions and could even speak their minds without hesitation when debating with Christians and Muslims. Such a debate is mentioned in a letter from the Khazar king Joseph, as if the Jews had achieved a complete victory. This debate occurred during the reign of the Byzantine Emperor Leo III (717–741), who allowed the Jewish community’s Khazarised commander, Bulan, to adopt the name Sabriel—a name found in the Gospel—and to pursue a brilliant military career that led to the Khazars’ defeat (see further below). . The brutal murder of the jurist left by Mervan to spread Islam—not at the hands of savage infidels or fanatical Christians, but by Jewish rabbis

⁷ See below (28).

⁸ Artamonov, *Khazars*, p. 248.

However, as the Arab writer al-Bakrī recounts, this was no coincidence.⁹ Yet this murder was an exceptional incident. After 750, the Khazars returned to their former beliefs and even opened their arms to supporters of the Umayyad dynasty who sought political asylum from them.

During the reign of the new Abbasid dynasty, the Khazars launched actual military campaigns, penetrating beyond the Caucasus between 764 and 779 and liberating Kakheti, Tao [Taveli]-Klarcet and Abkhazia from Arab rule. Now, it was not the Caliphate that threatened the Khazars, but the Khazars who threatened the Caliphate.

The Byzantine Empire, which had been dragged into constant warfare—marked by internal strife and alternating victories for both sides against the Arabs—no longer posed any threat to the Khazars. Allying with the Khazars was proving so costly for the Byzantines that, for example, the attempts by the Crimean Goths to break free from Khazar rule and return to the empire's authority received not the slightest support from the Greeks, and the leader of the rebellion was handed over to the Khazars. However, the Khazars treated the prisoner with considerable mercy, even turning a blind eye to his escape from prison.¹⁰ It seems the Khazars did not regard the Gothic affair as particularly significant.

Once the raids began to yield rich spoils, the Khazar khans of the Achi-na dynasty continued the operations on a larger scale. In 762, Hamzin, Lakz and Alanya,¹¹ [the land of the Alans] fell into the hands of the Khazars. In short, the fruits of Mervan's campaigns had been in vain, and the Caucasus Mountains had become a natural boundary between the Eurasian steppe and the Islamic world—the Levant.

However, the mutual interaction between the Caliphate and Khazaria had not ceased; it had merely taken on a different form. Warriors had been replaced by merchants, who had turned the Khazars and the Volga into the route of the caravan road leading to Biarmia or the Great Perm region. Arab silver dirhams were flowing northwards in exchange for valuable furs. The new Khazar capital of Itil, situated in the Volga-Aktübe floodplain, and the Great Bulgar cities located slightly downstream of the Kama's confluence with the Volga, had become key transit points for trade. Transit trade had also encouraged the development of agriculture and pomegranate production. This was because surplus produce found a market in the Itil market, where travellers suffering from hunger along the sea route purchased provisions.

9 Ibid., p. 277.

10 Ibid., pp. 254–256.

11 Ibid., p. 243.

Consequently, a distinct world had emerged between the Arabs and the Khazars.

To summarise. This small Turkic-Khazar ethnic group, which maintained its independent existence for a century and a half (650–800), not only preserved its independence but also expanded the borders of its state as far as the Don in the west, the Caucasus Mountains and the Yayla in the south, and the Yayık in the east. Whilst determining the northern border is difficult, it is doubtful that it had a fixed boundary. We may return later to the issue of the gradually diminishing sphere of influence as one moved away from the capital.

The flexibility of the state system—which we might regard as a variant of the Turkic model—created opportunities for reconciliation with neighbouring ethnic groups and sub-ethnic groups, namely the small tribes intermingling with the Khazars. The strength of ethnic cohesion, however, determined the affiliation of the entire Khazarian people with the West Eurasian super-ethnos.

The sole exception to this was the small Jewish colony living in the valley-strewn region of Dagestan, which coexisted peacefully alongside the Khazars. However, friendly relations and ethnic contacts were not limited to this alone. The Jews were a distinct group in terms of their political circumstances and the prevailing conditions; in contrast, the Khazars were bound by the consciousness of the people and, in particular, by the decisions taken of their own volition by the khans and beys. The laws of nature have their own logic. In the 9th century, as this logic came to dominate the situation, a terrifying super-ethnic chimera emerged in place of ethnic xenophobia.

In history, whilst a complete repetition of political circumstances is never possible, it often leads to a realignment of the balance of power. After 250 years of independent existence, Khazaria had grown so powerful that this tiny fiefdom, belonging to one of the princes of the Western Turkic Khaganate, had transformed into a state powerful enough to win a war against the Arab Caliphate. Moreover, in this state—which served as an entirely unexpected example—the fates of the Jewish and Khazar peoples were intertwined. However, we shall not proceed further until we have finished recounting the account of Khazaria's southern neighbours.

12 Kseniye (ksenos – guest): A word derived from geology.

10. Phase : The Transformation

In the passionate rise of the ethnic system, the social imperative ‘be as you ought to be!’ plays a significant role in intensifying the mutual devotion within the ethnos and even the super-ethnos. Indeed, thanks to this devotion, the early caliphs, and later the Umayyad caliphs, were able to channel the energy of their subjects into conquests and the suppression of rebellions within the realm. However, the rise of passion inevitably exceeds the system’s capacity and undermines its stability. When the imperative of the akmatic phase, “Be yourself!”, emerges—always spontaneously—the system breaks down like a car whose wheels fly off and whose shaft shatters as it races at excessive speed. This excessive heat can only be cooled by the spilling of blood.

For example, between 680 and 701, the rebellion led by the Umayyad commander Haccaj was crushed with the blood of Arabs, Persians, Shiites and Kharijites. Haccac, through this savagery, halted the course of ethnic history for fifty years, but halting the natural process of ethno-genesis is more difficult than stopping an avalanche. ‘The enemy of God and mankind’, Haccac, took 150,000 lives; yet these people had managed to contribute their genetic material to the population before they died. Indeed, by the 8th century, the level of fervour among the Persians and Berbers had equalled that of the Arabs, and in some cases even surpassed it. For this reason, the Umayyad throne in Damascus stood as if upon a volcano ready to erupt. Although the Umayyads had placed all supporters of Ali under house arrest, the turn to claim the throne had come to Abu’l-Abbas Saffah, who possessed a capable aide in Abu Muslim—the grandson of the Prophet’s uncle Abbas, who had risen from slavery to become a commander.

In 744, whilst the white banner of the Shi’ites flew in Kufa, the red banner of the Kharijites had long been flying across a region stretching from western Iran to southern Arabia. When the Kaysi tribe began to clash with the Kalbi tribe, the latter had already turned against the Umayyads. Finally, on 9 June 747, 4,000 rebels in Khorasan unfurled the Abbasids’ black banner and set off westwards towards Damascus, the city they detested.

Everyone living within the caliphate’s territories who harboured a grudge against the Umayyads had joined the Abbasids’ ranks: Iranian peasants, Bedouins—the Kelbites, runaway slaves; Muslims—Sunnis, Shiites, Khawarij; non-Muslims—Mazdakites, Manichaeans, Nestorians and Zoroastrians.

Mervan's forces had been routed, and by January 750, it was all over. The Abbasids, who had succeeded the Umayyads, were obliged to govern all these people belonging to different groups and factions; but this was a rather difficult task. The first Abbasid caliph, Abu'l-Abbas (749–754), made it his policy to have all members of the Umayyad dynasty executed, despite their willingness to pledge allegiance to him. The second caliph, Mansur (754–775), had Abu Muslim—through whom he had ascended the throne—treacherously murdered. His son, al-Mahdi (775–785), opened the door to intrigue within the palace. Consequently, his successor, al-Hadi (785–786), was murdered, and he was succeeded by his other son, Harun al-Rashid (786–809), who is unjustly praised in **The Thousand and One Nights**. He, too, was in fact a ruthless despot and would have his best vizier, a descendant of the Barmakids, murdered.

All that has been recounted, and the events that marked the very beginning of this treachery, demonstrate that arrogance had reached its absolute limit; the interests of the ruling dynasty—and by extension, those of the state—were being utterly disregarded.¹³ However wicked, ruthless and hypocritical (in a religious sense) the Umayyads may have been, they went from victory to victory; whilst not being sincere, they did uphold the principles of Islam and jihad. The Abbasids, however, despite being devout Sunnis, had caused the Arabs to lose their high standing in the state founded by their heroic forefathers. They had driven the Arabs from administration, the Persians from the army, the Blacks from service roles, and the Jews from the markets. Baghdad had become a world-class centre of trade; yet the caliphs did not wish to be held to account by the city's inhabitants. For they trusted not their own people, but the sycophants, ingrates and informers who surrounded them.

This extreme individualism demonstrates that the Arabs, having entered the acute phase of passionate tension in the 8th–9th centuries, had sunk to the level of the Byzantines of the 5th century. Perhaps the reason for this was polygamy, and consequently the fact that the children of the Passioners, born to various mothers, filled the ranks of the army, the markets, the palaces and the mosques. For these children, who were cared for by their mothers until the age of five, were legally considered to be of their fathers' lineage. The growth of passionerism and ethnic intermarriage had destroyed the Arab family structure. In such a situation, could the unity of the state be preserved?

13 Müller, A. *History of Islam*, II/147.

Undoubtedly, during such a period of governance, one could no longer speak of conquests. On the contrary, Spain was lost in 756, the Maghreb (Morocco) in 789, and Ifriqiya (Tunisia) in 800. The initiative had begun to shift from Muslims to Christians on a global scale.

However, the loss of political unity had imparted a flexibility that allowed for expansion without the need for a super-ethnic system or heavy, bloody wars. The first three centuries of inviting people to Islam had proved extremely costly, with heavy taxes levied on newly converted populations. Consequently, the mountain dwellers of the Hindu Kush and the steppe peoples of Central Asia were eager to remain independent whilst embracing Islam. The impregnable fortresses built upon sheer cliffs and in impassable gorges firmly safeguarded the mountain peoples' independence, whilst those living in the cities deemed it appropriate to seek a conciliatory path between their consciences and the mechanisms of governance. Those who chose this path were labelled 'Shi'a', even though they did not embrace it and did not even follow it.

The Arabs' centuries-long rule in Iran and North Africa had altered the ethnic distinction criteria of past eras. The Bedouins, who had gradually eliminated former tribal differences, now acted as guides and guards for the pilgrimage caravans rather than engaging in pastoralism; Sabianism, meanwhile, was turning into heresy. As the people migrating to the cities intermingled with the local population, and since 'Eastern'-style cities—as the reader will recognise from the detailed descriptions of travellers and storytellers—had already been established by the 8th century, the changes in Arabia and the Sahara were proceeding very slowly.

Here, from an ethnological perspective, the clan-tribal principle had been supplanted by the formation of confessional sub-ethnic groups. As Islamic doctrine is monolithic and supposedly does not permit apostasy or heresy, this situation may seem peculiar. However, passionate people, if there was a reason to break away, would also find a pretext.

With the massacre of Caliph Osman in 656, which led to the first civil war, the unity in question had been shattered. In 657, a new movement—namely the 12,000 warriors comprising the Khawarij—abandoned Caliph Ali. Initially purely political, these three movements had established their own ideological systems and social relationship patterns amongst themselves and within their communities; they had mobilised their supporters—particularly the urban populations—to oppose the ruling authority, and in many cases had adopted Shi'ism. The nomads, meanwhile, had formed the Khawarij.

In this fragmentation of the Muslim world, the heretics—namely the Zoroastrians, the Hurremites and Mazdeans, the Christian Monophysites in Armenia and Egypt, and the Monophysites in the mountains of Lebanon—played an active role. It was inevitable that all these doctrinal divisions would lead to bloodshed. For the ambitious and embittered descendants of the Arabs were seeking an outlet, and they found it in waging war against the caliphs. These wars gave rise to various factions; most of these have been erased from history, but some grew to the level of sub-ethnic groups.

The relationship between the categories of ‘ethnos’ and ‘culture’ is highly variable. Even if the ethnos consists of a system of prohibitions, ancestral traditions, and applies only to relatives and tribal spiritual leaders, it cannot exist without concepts of justice. However, all this becomes a matter of routine if all the virtues of the state’s social system are reduced to mere objects; but most importantly, if those who established the cultural complex are exiled and foreigners become a privileged class, the established order may end up resembling a house from which the founding family has been expelled. This was precisely the situation in the Arab Caliphate during the 9th century.

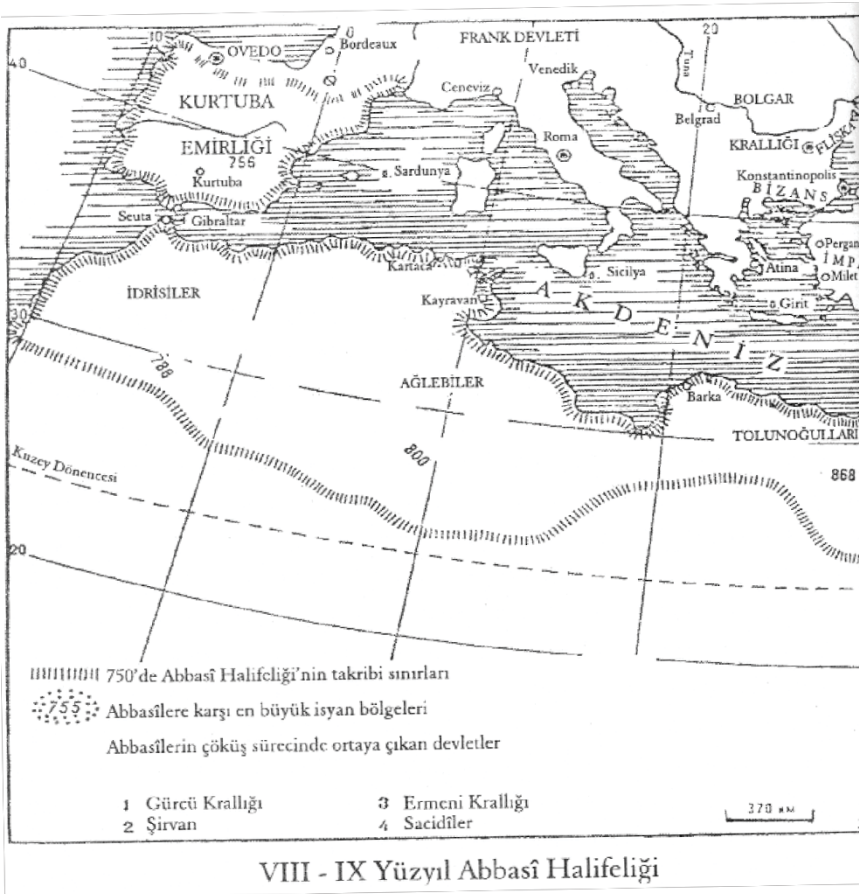
The Arab fervour that spread throughout Iran found its echoes in a series of rebellions, condemned to death yet renewed under various slogans. In 755, Sumbad Mag in Western Khorasan; in 767, Üstad Sis in Eastern Khorasan; in 778–779, the ‘Red-flagged ones’ in Gorgan; the “White-clad ones” in Transoxiana in 776–783; and the Hurremî (Mazdean) uprising in Azerbaijan and Western Iran under the leadership of Babak between 816 and 837. However, the most significant was the rebellion launched by Harun al-Rashid’s son, al-Ma’mun, against his brother, al-Amin. Let me explain the reason for this.

Ma’mun was the legitimate heir apparent; his mother was Persian. Al-Amin, however, was the younger son, born to an Arab mother. For this reason, Harun al-Rashid had installed Al-Amin, who was supported by the Arabs, on the throne. Me’mun, who had previously served as governor in Khorasan, raised the banner of rebellion in 811. He was supported by the Persians, and although Arab resistance lasted for several years, Me’mun’s supporters emerged victorious in 813. From this date onwards, the caliphate slipped from the hands of the Arabs; it became the representative of the Muslim super-ethnos, which was politically divided into several emirates and ideologically fragmented along the lines of the Shi’ite and Sunni sects. These sects, numbering as many as four, had brought different districts of the most populous cities under their control and were constantly at loggerheads with one another.

Life in Muslim cities was easy and pleasant. In contrast, it was quite harsh in the nomadic encampments and villages. In cities where trade flourished, the population lived in a mixed state, and the city's inhabitants were often composed of people who did not reside there permanently. One group would arrive, conduct their business, and then leave. Then another group would take their place, followed by a third. Thus, to Damascus, Alexandria, Tunis and Seville, along with perfumes and silks from the East, came new, interesting, rational and forward-thinking ideas. Many sects had emerged, and their adherents presented themselves as Shiites in order to escape exile. The sects had seized power and, just as the Sunni had done when suppressing the rebels, they too had grown wealthy through their hold on power.

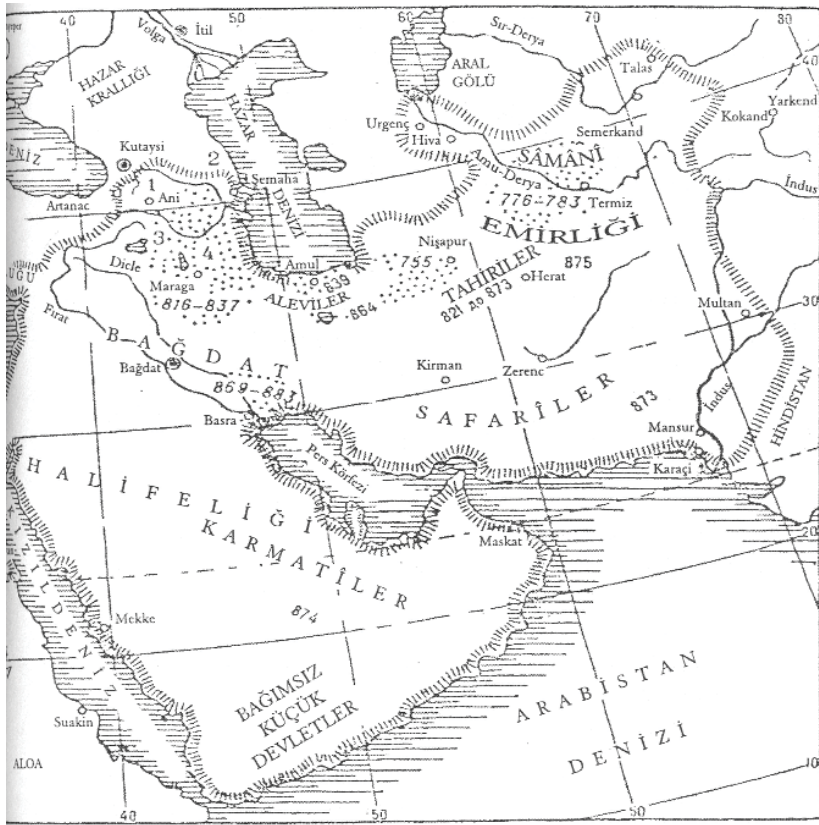
Among the people who came to the market were educated individuals and even masters, and it was impossible for the common folk to understand on their own what these people were saying here and there. Thus, the original ethnic worldviews and ideas were distorted by those who propagated these teachings. All of this was labelled 'Muslim culture' and presented to neighbouring Christian peoples as the highest point that reason and logic could reach.

Both sides responded to this proposal: the Greeks, proud of their ancient cultural traditions, viewed 'Eastern' philosophy with suspicion, whilst the French and Spaniards embraced it with pride; yet, despite being unable to put forward any counter-arguments, they adopted these ideas and subjected them to a certain critical scrutiny. By the 9th century, the Aryan tradition had been forgotten, and the culture of priests unaffiliated with any order had vanished along with it. As Constantinople had become the centre of iconoclasm, the priests were unable to prevent the training of episcopal candidates in Córdoba. Thus, the offshoots of Eastern teachings also spread from France to England. The adoption of the culture of the Arab ethnogenesis's period of stagnation took place in this manner.



In those days when the ignorant Frankish kings invited masters from heretical Ireland—where Jewish teachers resided who could instruct them in essential languages such as Greek, Latin and ancient Hebrew—as well as from the heretical Constantinople and, of course, from Córdoba and Seville, the inhabitants of Western Europe, who were experiencing the Carolingian Renaissance, gazed in awe at this magnificent edifice, whose foundations had long since begun to crumble.

Jews and Christians of various denominations were scattered throughout all the great cities of the Caliphate. Apart from participating in the economic life of the Near East, they were translating Greek authors into Arabic—



In doing so, they were also enriching Islamic culture. During the Umayyad period, Christians had engaged in such endeavours. For example, John of Damascus, a man of great intellect and renown, had sought to identify similarities between Christianity and Islam by interpreting the teaching regarding the 'Word of God'—that is, the Qur'an—which God revealed to the Prophet Muhammad through the angel Gabriel, as an eternal variant of the 'Logos'—the second face of the Supreme Creator—and thus attempted to identify similarities between Christianity and Islam.

Following the Abbasid victory, the cultural centre was moved to the new city of Baghdad, founded by Caliph Mansur on the western bank of the Tigris. Suri-

Apart from those in the region, there were other readers in Iraq as well. A large proportion of the Iraqi Arabs had fled the bloody wars in the military colonies established in the 7th century, such as Kufa and Basra. They were joined by the descendants of the Persians and the merchants who had come to Basra via the Persian Gulf. These second- and third-generation followers required specific ideologies such as philosophy and theology. Having found this ideology, they had broken away from the Ahl al-Sunnah. Thus, they were given the name 'Mu'tazilah' (the Secessionists). However, they presented themselves as the 'People of Unity and Truth'.¹⁴

In fact, the Mu'tazilites had severed all ties with Islam. By denying that the Qur'an was created, they effectively abolished its sanctity and thus began to interpret the verses allegorically, that is, in whatever way they wished. Since they did not accept predestination, they also opposed fatalism, arguing that Allah would not decree the creation of evil. They ruled that the misfortunes befalling a person were the result not of Allah's decree, but of his own limited will. On this point, they shared the same view as the Zoroastrians. They argued that if human beings did not possess the ability to choose between good and evil through their own will, they would not have been created. Furthermore, they held the view that God could not be known because He could not be distinguished from Satan. In their view, heaven and hell were not real either, but merely metaphors.

On the other hand, the Mu'tazilites were also opposed to the advocates of religious freedom (the Qadariyya). In 827, under their guidance, Caliph al-Ma'mun adopted Mu'tazilite teachings as the official tenets of state faith. In 833, he established an inquisition and imposed censorship; he subjected Sunni Muslims to exile and flogging.¹⁵ This harsh regime continued until 850–851; however, by then the Mu'tazilites were also being regarded as 'heretics', just like the Khawarij and the Shi'ites. Indeed, the fanatical Sunni Mu'tazilites—

14 Bartold, W. W. *Islam*. Prague, 1918, p. 70; Petruševskij, I. P. *Islam in Iran in the 7th–15th Centuries*. Leningrad, 1966, pp. 199–213. Hereafter: Petruševskij, *Islam in Iran*.

15 Al-Ma'mun was initially a moderate Shia. (See Bartold, *Islam*, p. 72). However, when the Zaydi branch of the Shiites rebelled against him in Iraq in 815, he was forced to have the leader of the rebels beheaded (See Petruševskij, *Islam in Iran*, p. 248). Following this incident, he began to harbour sympathy for the Mu'tazilites, and Sunnis, Shiites, and even the Mu'tazilites themselves suffered as a result.

During the reign of al-Wakil, even Christian and Jewish dhimmis began to be deprived of the rights granted to them by Islam and subjected to strict surveillance.¹⁶

In essence, the Mu'tazilites' brief period of influence at the court of the Caliph was truly a momentous event. A small group of intellectuals—who read texts, translated Greek philosophers into Arabic and engaged in scholarly debates—had positioned themselves between the people and the government. Upon their teachings gaining recognition, the Mu'tazilites welcomed with approval Caliph al-Mutasim's reorganisation of the imperial guard. The imperial guard was filled with Turkish slaves, whilst the infantry was composed of Daylamites. The administration had armed itself against the people.

However, the Turks were not people to be used so easily. Not only had they killed Caliph al-Mutasim in 861, but they had also murdered his successors over the course of nine years, yet the people of Baghdad had not uttered a word of protest. The Abbasid Caliphate had fallen into a pitiable state.

There was another, even more disastrous development for the Islamic world, namely the spread of Batiniyya, which allowed the Qur'an to be interpreted in any manner one wished. When this doctrine fell into the hands of scheming individuals, they established the Ismailis or Karmatians, based on the principle of unconditional obedience to the 'holy ones' and their secret wisdom. Yet wherever there is mystery, there is also Satan. Consequently, blood would begin to flow like a torrent.

11. The Defenders of the Corrupted Truth

By the mid-8th century, the Alevis had split into moderates and extremists. The latter came to be known as the Ismailis or Karmatians. The Qarmatians had altered their religious orientation; that is, having effectively broken away from Islamic dogma, they had inherited the old Arab passion. Essentially, their community in Bahrain had transformed into a sub-ethnic group and, in 899, established an independent state in the centre of Lahsa. The war between the Qarmatians and the Muslims was particularly brutal. As for the reason:

Islamic law had imposed an additional tax on Christians and Jews in exchange for allowing them to practise their religions freely. Pagans were exempt from this tax by converting to Islam. However, the nihilistic doctrine—

¹⁶ Petruševskij, *Islam in Iran*, p. 255.

The 'heretics', who were the representatives of this movement, faced the threat of death. A sort of inquisition had been established against them, headed by a man bearing the title 'Executioner of the Heretics'¹⁷. In such circumstances, it was only natural that free thought should go underground and re-emerge in an unrecognisable form in the second half of the 9th century. The founder of the new theory was now clear. This was a man named Abdullah ibn Maymun, of Median origin. He was a renowned physician and had died in 874 (875). His successor, Ubaydullah, having seized power in Africa as a grandson of Ali, had resorted to a lie that allowed him to present himself as a spiritual figure.¹⁸

Since it is founded from the outset on the principle of falsehood, the dogmatics and principles of this new doctrine can be explained, but cannot be formulated. "The adherents of the new doctrine presented themselves in various places under different names, such as the Ismailis, Karmatians, Batini, Ravendi, Berkuki, Cenahi, Saidi, Muhammiri, Mubanzi, Talimi, and so on. They all had a single common aim: to fragment and destroy Islam, whatever the cost."¹⁹ Had the historical course of events not vindicated him, one might have doubted the veracity of these words, spoken by an enemy of the groups in question.

The outward aspect of the doctrine was quite simple: the Mahdi—that is, the saviour of humanity and the restorer of justice—would rectify the world's ugliness. This belief found resonance amongst the masses, particularly during difficult times. In the 9th century, however, the situation was extremely dire. The rebellion of the commanders, the uprising of tribes in areas far from the city centres and of black slaves in the city centres, the brutality of the soldiers, the arbitrary attitude of the administration, the defeats suffered in the wars with Byzantium, and the Zindik

17 Zindik derives from the Persian word 'zend' – meaning 'thought'. It corresponds to the Greek word "gnosis" – meaning "knowledge". Consequently, "Zindik" also carries a Gnostic connotation; however, during the Abbasid period, this word acquired a new meaning and began to be used in the sense of "sorcerer". (See Müller, *History of Islam*, II/186).

18 "From the outside, they appeared to have accepted Shi'ite dogmas and adopted Ali's Sunni path, but in their innermost being they were infidels". (*Kitab al-Bayan*, p. 158; referring to Mizam al-Mulk's Siyaset-name.) I.P. Petruševskij, who regarded the "Galiye" and "Ismailiye" as a separate religion and noted that they had adopted Shi'a teachings only in outward appearance, has also reached the same conclusion. See Petruševskij, *Islam in Iran*, p. 242.

19 Nizam al-Mulk, *Siyasetname*, p. 223.

the rise of fanaticism... the heavy burden brought about by all this had been laid upon the shoulders of the wretched peasants and townspeople, among whom were cultured but impoverished Persians and Syrians. The number of angry crowds had grown so much that all it took was a torch to be lit above their heads.

Within the borders of the Caliphate, it was not possible to freely express non-orthodox views. For this reason, doctrinal propagandists and even (missionaries) had hidden themselves behind a Shi'ite façade. They interpret the verses of the Qur'an in a manner designed to sow doubt in the assemblies and attribute the cause of all these calamities to the neglect of the Eternal Law; they claim that if this law were to be revived... Just as the propagandist reaches this very point in his speech, he pauses for a moment, as if he had forgotten something, to arouse curiosity. The people present in the assembly, now thoroughly intrigued, urge him to continue. However, the propagandist again takes refuge in the Qur'an and demands that they swear not to tell anyone what they have heard; after being satisfied that the initiate is well-intentioned and obedient, he asks for financial assistance to continue his propaganda activities and other undertakings. This is followed by an explanation to the new disciple of the doctrine that the 'true imams' are the descendants of Ali, whilst the family of the prophets is the equal of Muhammad. Once the disciple has swallowed this bait, they no longer have any connection to Islam. For, in their view, the final and supreme prophet is the Mahdi; he will emerge and uproot the religion of Islam. The fourth stage involves informing the masses, whilst the fifth involves the participation of select individuals in the cause. The Qur'an is the source of religious worship and Islamic philosophy, but from an esoteric perspective, it is open to interpretation as desired. In the final stage, it is explained to the disciple, who has become ready for the revelation of the secret, that those who came before the Mahdi attained only symbolic knowledge and known truths. The prophets who brought all religions were mistaken men; consequently, their teachings hold no meaning for the disciple. There is no such thing as God in the heavens; there is only another world that bears no resemblance to this one. Finally, it is explained to the disciple who has reached the rank where the secret is revealed that those who came before the Mahdi possessed only the metaphorical understanding of perception and the dissemination of truth. For the person who has reached the rank of the secret, there are no longer any laws. There is no God in the heavens. There is only a second world that bears no resemblance whatsoever to our own

20 According to the faith of all Muslims, these are Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad. The seventh, the Mahdi, must appear before the Day of Judgement.

There is. Light is but the imam in the form of the spirit. True power belongs to the Ismailis. One must pay gold, which can be easily obtained by obeying him, seizing booty from those of other faiths, and engaging in trade by capturing and selling neighbours who do not join the secret community. All Muslims are permissible enemies to be lied to, betrayed, killed and raped. Anyone who joins the path, even if they are at the first stage, cannot turn back; and if they attempt to do so, the punishment is death. The aim of this abhorrent way of life is clear: for individuals, it is to attain the rank of an angel; for the community, it is the path shown by the 'Imam of the Age'²¹—that is, the Fatimids—through which the entire world will eventually be compelled to submit. Indeed, this 'cancerous virus' had consumed the very body of the caliphate.

12. Integration

Let us now pause from following the course of events and attempt to discern its geographical significance. The psychology of an ethnic group manifests itself in spontaneously formed dominants—systems beyond conscious awareness—and behavioural stereotypes. However, if something else sufficiently powerful exerts an influence on the organic structure, then the disruption of both the dominant patterns and the stereotypes is inevitable. In this case, an eclectic and, as a rule, oppositely characterised anti-system emerges in place of the organic worldview. Here, let us apply V.I. Vernadsky's third law of biochemistry: "Thought does not arise in the form of energy, but rather produces an effect supposedly corresponding to it"²². In the matter under consideration, the Mu'tazilite view has served as a steering mechanism that reverses the passionate impulses of the salik by 180 degrees. After surviving the phase of partial annihilation, the Arabs who managed to survive transformed into a 'baki-ye'; Arabic, as a cultural element, spread throughout the entire Mediterranean region independently of Arab ethnogenesis. The multi-ethnic Muslims evolved into a super-ethnos from the 10th century onwards, in line with the influential course of history. Within this super-ethnos, the first in line was the Daylamite Buyid dynasty, followed by the Fatimid anti-system and the Karmatian outlaws' republic in Bahrain, and in third place were the Hamdanids, the Sons of Ukayl, and other Syrian Bedouin emirates.

²¹ Bertels, A. E. *Nasir-i Khosrov and Ismailism*. Moscow, 1959, p. 262.

²² Vernadsky, V. I. *The Chemical Structure of the Earth's Biosphere and Its Environment*. Moscow, 1965, p. 272.

It emerged, and only in fourth place did the Sunni caliphate appear in Baghdad, surrounded on all sides by hostile Shiites.

It would seem that, in the face of this tragic situation, the spread of Islam should have ceased, but the opposite occurred. Whilst the Daylamites adopted Shi'ism, the Karluk Turks (in 960) and the Turkic Yagma tribe (in 1000) embraced Sunni Islam.²³ Why? Or rather, for what reason?

Both ethnic groups—the mountain-dwelling Daylamites and the steppe-dwelling Turkmen—were strangers to Islamic culture; yet, much like the Berbers of North Africa, they took advantage of the fragmentation among the Arabs. Their strategy was sound: to support the weak and divide the strong. No matter how dire the situation in the Abbasid Caliphate of Baghdad, they had managed to remain the rulers of the Sunnis. It was not only the masses but also the Samanids, the powerful rulers of Khorasan and Transoxiana, the Sajids, the rulers of Azerbaijan, the Shirvanshahs, and the ruler of Derbent who recognised him as their overlord. Sunni Islam had weakened, but it had not lost its significance. A kind of political balance had been established.

It was at such a time that the Daylamites emerged. Having abandoned their barren mountainous lands and harbouring the ambition to restore the Sasanian Empire, the Daylamites, under the leadership of commanders from the Buya family, inflicted the punishment the Arab invaders deserved before sweeping into the heart of western Iran. They separated the part of Iraq belonging to the Abbasids from Khorasan, which was under Samanid rule. However, aware that becoming a ruling class in Islamic lands required conversion to Islam, the Buyids adopted Shi'ism, at least for the sake of appearances, to ensure the success of their conquests.²⁴

The Arabs defended their countries as best they could. That is to say, in an extremely poor and disorganised manner. The Hamdanids, rulers of Mosul, possessed a sufficient army to support the Caliph of Baghdad, yet they did not even attempt to do so. The only thing that mattered to them was expanding the borders of their province. It is for this very reason that the Arabs' time and energy were squandered on intrigues, internal conflicts, betrayals, and a host of trivial matters currently irrelevant to our subject. The Buyids, on the other hand, kept attacking, even if they were sometimes unsuccessful.

23 Gumilev, *Muhayyel*, p. 66.

24 Müller, *History of Islam*, II/262 ff.

The people of Iraq, and particularly those of Baghdad, detested foreign conquerors and the Daylamites, whom they regarded as Shiites. Moreover, they detested the Turkish slaves who served as their defenders, shared their faith, and filled the ranks of the emirs of Syria and Mesopotamia. But what they feared most were their own kinsmen, the Karmatians. The urban Arabs were far from possessing the chivalry needed to protect themselves from enemies, friends, neighbouring Bedouins, and even their own rulers. And yet they are said to be the descendants of those who conquered half the world!

In the 10th century, a terrible famine had broken out in Baghdad, which had been plundered by both the Turks and the Daylamites. The bourgeoisie had handed over everything they possessed to escape the soldiers' slaughter. Consequently, on 19 December 945, Ahmed Buwayhid entered the capital following a brief skirmish at the main gate; he forced Caliph al-Musta'fi to appoint him as emir al-umara (commander of commanders), preferring to proclaim himself sultan rather than seize the magnificent throne.²⁵ However, the Caliph was later deposed from his throne for attempting to arrest an Alevi; his eyes were gouged out, and he died in prison.²⁶ His relatives, meanwhile, were stripped of their possessions and reduced to a pitiable state.

Although a large proportion of the population of Iraq, and indeed Baghdad, remained Sunni, the Buwayhid victory marked the zenith of Shi'ism. Following its victories in Iran and Syria, Shi'ism had also succeeded in Africa, where the Fatimids had brought Egypt under their rule in 969. Sunni Islam, as the dominant school of thought, had survived only among the descendants of hypocritical Muslims—the Umayyads of Al-Andalus and the Samanids of Central Asia. In other words, Sunni Islam had been pushed to the fringes of the Islamic world; Shi'ism, which had taken on the mantle of Islam, had lost the wars it had waged against the Byzantines and the Georgians.²⁷ The pangs of the breaking point in the Muslim super-ethnos had begun to manifest themselves.

25 Ibid., pp. 267–268.

26 Mihailov, I. B. *The Religious-Political Struggle in Baghdad under the Buwayhids and Seljuks (10th–12th Centuries)* // Islam, p. 223. Hereafter: *Religious-Political*.

27 Due to the Shia-Sunni conflict, it had not been possible to raise an army to oppose the Byzantines in 974. (Mihailov, *Religiozno-političeskaya*, p. 225).

At the point of rupture, if ideological disputes take the place of real political life, unity breaks down as if the ethnic bond had been severed. Arab chroniclers themselves date the onset of fragmentation (*asabiyya*) to the year 974.²⁸ Indeed, from this date onwards, the Shi'ite Arabs sided not with their fellow Arabs but with the Daylamites. By 1015–1018, the matter had escalated to open clashes in Baghdad.

Had the Seljuk Turks not intervened, the Buyids, who remained in power for 110 years, would have brought Islam and Islamic culture to a complete end. The Seljuks, whose conquests began with the liberation of Iran from Buyid rule, sided with the weaker party and, with its support, achieved victory. Even the Caliph allied himself with them, and in 1049, with the help of Turkish armies, he occupied the Shi'ite quarters. Tughril Bey, who entered Baghdad in 1055, proclaimed himself sultan. The Caliph was, in appearance, the supreme ruler, but at the very least, whereas he had previously been held captive by the heretics during the Buyid period, he had now become the spiritual leader of the Muslims. The Seljuks' victories would halt the Christian onslaught, and their descendants would put the Crusaders to the sword.

But the Daylamites were now gone too. As the Daylamites had taken their bravest and strongest young men with them when they left their homeland, Daylam had been depopulated and had become a patch of land not even worth conquering. The last small dynasty claiming descent from the Sassanians—the Baluspanids—survived until the late 16th century, after which the cities around the Caspian Sea were annexed to Iran.²⁹ Victories, like defeats, can be devastating.

The behaviour of the Sunnis themselves had also changed. Although they had previously been united around a single faith and doctrine, by the end of the 11th century, the Hanbalis in Baghdad tore up the treatise of Imam Kushayri—who had introduced certain Jewish elements into Islam—shouting, “This is treason and apostasy against Islam!”, and razed the madrasa to the ground.³⁰ This incident caused such great turmoil in Baghdad that the Shiites demanded the caliph be replaced.

28 Ibid., p. 225.

29 Bosworth, C. E. *Muslim Dynasties*. Moscow, 1971, p. 124. Hereafter: Bosworth, *Dynasties*.

30 Mihailov, *Religious-Political*, p. 226.

Three years later, the Hanbalis rebelled not only against the Shiites but also against the ruling authority. The Caliph was forced to seek assistance from troops who dealt harshly with the Hanbalis, and thus the Hanbalis ceased to exist as an organisation.³¹*Meanwhile, those who managed to survive—the Hanafis and Shafi'is—made up for the losses suffered, and the massacres in the Arab and Persian cities came to an end. Alongside this turmoil, which lasted 170 years, a constant civil war raged between the Seljuks and the Atabeks; consequently, the emergence of a third intervening power—the Mongols—in the weakened country came as no surprise and brought with it inevitable consequences.

³¹ Ibid., p. 226.

* The Hanbali school of thought would later be revived by Abdulkadir al-Gilani.
(Trans.)

III. THE CHRISTIAN SUPER- N ETHNOS

13. The Western Crisis

Upon the ruins of the Roman Empire and the ashes left behind by the great migration of the Germans to the West, from the 6th to the 8th century, an irreversible and inevitable process of decline had begun, driven by a passionate tension that brought with it the collapse of art, culture, the economy and political power. However the situation changed completely in the 9th century. A 'geographical revolution' took place when the warriors became counts, divided the 'Holy Empire' into three parts, and began to speak in their own native languages. This also marked the emergence of French and German as official languages (the Treaty of Strasbourg, 842).

The division of the countries had been carried out with great artistry, and those kingdoms lacking the capacity to survive would continue to fall into ruin. Essentially, the new revolution was ethnic in nature. Former Neustria, France, Burgundy, Aquitaine, Brittany and Toulouse were divided into palatinates comprising ethnic groups with new ethnic characteristics formed from a mixture of Wels and Teutons; the formation of these new ethnic groups was completed in 888. A truly rapid upheaval, is it not?

It is well known that just as certain chemical reactions occur with the aid of high heat and catalysts, so too does ethnic intermingling at different stages of passionate tension manifest itself in various forms. At low levels, individuals are passive. Consequently, the combination of two stereotypes in the descendants leads to internal discord and a cacophony of traits that disrupts the organism's psychophysiological structure. However, at high levels, the organism is elastic. This enables the formation of entirely new stereotypes that did not previously exist, thereby giving rise to new ethnic groups. This

stage of ethnogenesis can, as a rule, be termed the creative stage, even if no cultural relics remain from it.

As the people in the western part of the Empire were more integrated, the changes were more pronounced and the process more intense. In the east, which was entirely inhabited by Germanic peoples, the older tribal federations had managed to preserve themselves for a longer period: the Saxons, Franks, Thuringians, Suevi and Bavarians. As a result, the Germans experienced a long-term division, giving rise to the Saxons, Bavarians, Franconians, and so on. Around the same time, this process also affected the Western Slavs, resulting in the formation of the Poles and Czechs. The Bodrich and Lutich peoples, meanwhile, engaged in a bloody war with their German neighbours and defeated them.

In this context, the most notable country was Scandinavia, a barren land that had long been silent. However, the Viking movement, considered a new phenomenon, began there in the 8th century and developed in the 9th century.

At the time of these events, the first Reconquista movement was also emerging in Spain. The Austrians, having managed to hold their ground entirely in the mountains, had driven the Arabs beyond the Tagus. Although they were defeated shortly afterwards, this attempt alone demonstrated that they still possessed a desire for war and victory.

The young Scandinavians had fought only against their own kin, but, unable to bring themselves to engage in open-field battles, they had opted for raiding. In the 9th century, these people, who used the rivers to reach the heartlands of the countries that offered them plunder, had become a nightmare for all of Europe's coastal cities. Not only Europe, but even America had fallen victim to the 'Norman wrath'; yet they had been unable to establish a foothold anywhere other than in northern France, now known as Normandy. In truth, they were not particularly powerful, but fortune favoured them, for those who opposed them in the 9th century were exceedingly weak.

The reason for the Normans' sudden and brief—a mere 300 years—reign of terror was unknown even to their contemporaries. The initial assumption was that this event was a punishment meted out by God for the sins of mankind. Yet, by the 9th century and even after the 11th century, people had deserved many punishments, but the Normans had no part in this.

Another theory suggested that Scandinavia's harsh climate forced people to abandon lands that were incapable of sustaining them. This is the Malthusian theory, which immediately attributes the causes of events to insurmountable difficulties. The Scandinavian climate is temperate due to the Gulf Stream. The country's population remains small even today. Consequently, there was no such thing as a migration problem a thousand years ago either. So, given this situation, why did farmers, who were so eager to work the land, abandon their fine professions and opt for the perilous life of raiding? You might think so!

According to the third theory, in Northern Europe, home and land are the elder brother. The younger brother, however, is forced to seek his livelihood at sea. There had been a herring run in the North Sea, and catching them was both easier and less dangerous—and more profitable—than risking one's life in France, England, or Ireland. Thus, the majority of the Vikings had set off on their voyages. Returning home was forbidden, even with booty. A young man heading for a 'vik'—a fortified Viking coastal settlement—would sever his ties with his family and clan once and for all. He was now as good as dead to his family, and consequently, the path home was blocked.

However, a circuitous path leading to the correct solution has been found. There is a connection between the Viking movement—which compared itself to the prosperous yet hard-pressed Heudings—and the emergence of saga poetry around the year 800. Literary scholars regard this as a 'mutation of its own kind'.¹ Perhaps; but the sagas sang songs for the Vikings. Consequently, both sides were involved in the mutation. Passion, however, is a mutation that appears suddenly and disappears as a result of natural selection, which fully aligns with the actual nature of the observed event.

Despite the extensive research conducted by many experts specialising in various fields, the question of the causes behind the Vikings' campaigns has not been fully clarified. Some historians believe that a satisfactory explanation for this outburst of mobility and aggression is generally impossible.² Others, however, downplay the significance and scale of the Viking movement and seek to portray it as merely one of the normal activities of the early Middle Ages—

1 See *History of Norway*. Moscow, 1980, p. 122.

2 Kendrick, T. D. *A History of the Vikings*. London, 1930, p. 22; Shoteling, H. *Viking Antiquities in Great Britain and Ireland*. Pt. I., Oslo, 1940, p. 10.

In many works concerning the Vikings' raids, however, the causes of these events are only briefly touched upon. Authors generally confine themselves to the view that the Vikings' lands were insufficient for them or that they acted out of a 'greed for plunder'.⁴ The latter possibility appears more realistic. For this impassioned impulse had also touched Scandinavia.

A. Ya. Gurevich describes this event as follows: 'Towards the end of the 8th century or the beginning of the 9th, a sharp turn occurred that disrupted the steady development of Scandinavian life. Among them emerged a new type of people—adventurous, charismatic individuals with connections to different lands—powerful seafarers. In short, the established way of life had been disrupted, and restoring that order had become impossible. This applied not only to certain individuals—outcasts or outlaws forced to seek a place to live as far away from their homeland as possible—but also to many members of the upper classes and ordinary people. Is it sufficient to add such a mundane explanation to the previously mentioned reasons for the Vikings' expeditions in order to obtain a surprising explanation for such a radical revolution in the lives of the Scandinavians? Probably not; even adding a new 'link' that transforms these causes or motives into the inner impulses driving people to action would not be sufficient. But might there not be a middle 'link' to be found?'⁵

If you view Scandinavia as a unique country unlike any other, you will of course find no such people. But if you broaden your perspective, the mystery will be solved. Let us return to the Viking episode in question and review what happened.

The sagas and skaldic poetry⁶ emerged in much the same way as the generation of Arab poets before and during the prophetic period of Muhammad. Or like Homer and Hesiod on the eve of the Hellenic colonisation, and Alcaeus and Sappho during the zenith of Hellenism. The departure of young and energetic people from their homelands, during Genghis Khan's campaigns and in his youth in Mongolia

3 Sawier, P. H. *The Age of the Vikings*. London, 1962, p. 194.

4 Gurevich, A. Ya. *The Viking Raids*. Moscow, 1966, pp. 136–137. Hereafter: Gurevich, *The Viking Raids*.

5 Ibid., p. 140.

6 Ibid., p. 146.

resembles the emergence of 'independent-minded people'⁷. It is certain that the campaigns on the steppe resembled sea expeditions.

Religious conversion is a struggle between the old gods—that is, the 'Van'—and the new 'As'. This phenomenon applies to all stages of ethnic resurgence. The cult of the "Ases" – the gods of the immoral, the dissolute, the wicked, the thieves, the perjurers and the evil-doers⁸ – persisted until the adoption of Christianity, that is, throughout the Viking era. However, dualistic beliefs were maintained for a long time even after the forced baptism in Scandinavia.⁹

As for art; the ancient figures of wild animals, reborn in the 8th century, gave way to new zoomorphic giants and depictions of dragons.¹⁰ Yes, the renewal was complete and spontaneous; but this too was a result of the ethnogenesis explosion or the passionate impulse.

14. The Vikings and the Feudal Lords of the ' '

Comparing the Viking Age with the feudal revolutions in France and the Reconquista in Spain allows us to pinpoint exactly how the axis of the 'passioner impulse' originating in Norway extended via Paris towards Austria and Portugal. The 'Christian World' was born there, but at the time of this birth, some of the people living on these lands were entirely pagan.

'The Christian World' is, just like 'The Islamic World', a rather theoretical concept. The overwhelming majority of the population of Western Europe had been baptised, but they had no knowledge whatsoever of the messages conveyed by the new religion. This was because the prayers and thanksgiving offered to God were, naturally, conducted in three languages – Hebrew, Greek and Latin – which the congregation did not understand. Furthermore, in the late 10th century, the Anglo-Saxon priest Ellfrick explained that the clergy could not comprehend the 'mysterious meaning' of the Bible, and that the desire to understand these mysteries did not suit the class that God had designated as knights—that is, the warrior class. Even as late as the 8th century, texts were still being written in Old English

7 *The History of the Countries of Outer Asia in the Middle Ages*. Moscow, 1970, pp. 207–209.

8 Gurevich, *Campaigns*, pp. 166–167.

9 *Ibid.*, pp. 166–169.

10 *Ibid.*, pp. 141–145.

There was a vast body of literature available.¹¹ This is precisely why it was easy to bring the Bible.

In 794, the meaning of the statement in the decision of the Synod of Frankfurt, 'Let no one think that prayer must be performed in only three languages!', had a different implication for the Christian churches and even the Carolingian Empire.¹² However, this situation remained valid until the transition phase to the ascendant trend that transformed the face of Western Europe from its formative period and established the 'Christian World' where the teaching of Christian doctrines was prohibited, amidst fragmentation and feudal revolutions.

Let us emphasise once again that words can be deceptive. When words become technical terms, they take on a new meaning. For example The 'passioner impulse' of the 9th century is a natural phenomenon and cannot be linked to the spread of Christianity, which is unquestionably a cultural phenomenon.

Let us now turn briefly to the Vikings, a subject on which a series of misguided judgements have been made that should not be taken seriously. Even though the population had grown, there was no mass migration in Scandinavia in the 9th century, a region where fjords are still plentiful today. The social structure was primitive, and the kings were chosen by the tribal chiefs. Until the 9th century, the Scandinavians barely managed to defend their lands against the raids of the Lapps, whom they eventually drove into the tundras of the Far North. They gave the name 'Vikings' to these people who refused to live together in tribes and submit to their own laws. In those days, the word 'Viking' carried a derogatory connotation, much like the modern terms 'pirate' or 'bandit'.¹³ If a young man abandoned his family to join the Vikings, his kin would consider him dead and mourn him. Indeed, surviving long voyages and constant warfare was no easy feat. Essentially, the Vikings were no braver than those they left behind in their homelands. Southern peoples are generally more combative than northerners; but this is not a sign of passion, but rather a different behavioural trait; it is an instinctive reaction that typically arises during self-defence, rather than aggression.

11 *Tales of the Origins of Slavic Writing*. Moscow, 1981, p. 28.

12 *Ibid.*, p. 26.

13 Magidovich I. P., Magidovich V. I. *The History of the Discovery and Study of the Euro-Pi*. Moscow, 1970, p. 113.

Like all people, the Vikings feared death, but before battle they would conceal these fears from one another by eating opium-laced 'false gold' mushrooms.¹⁴ Their contemporaries, the Arabs, went into battle sober, but the use of opium to induce a state of recklessness was practised by the Vikings, Arabs, Franks and Celts alike. During battle, they placed particular value on savage warriors (berserkers) who, like a bear, acted without knowing what they were doing and crushed the enemy with great force. After a seizure had passed, berserkers would suffer from deep depression until the next seizure. Essentially, under normal circumstances, they could not tolerate berserkers and would drive them out of the villages, forcing them to go to caves in the mountains or wherever they pleased. But within the Viking ranks, there was a place for berserkers. In other words, passion can turn even angry people into individuals who are not particularly brave. In other words, the Vikings were slightly different from other Scandinavian peoples. Because they were at the highest level of passion, they were unbearable types in the eyes of the less passionate Norwegians, who preferred to stay at home and fish for herring. For this reason, the passionate segment of the population broke away from the main body of the people and vanished into the wilderness. Thus, the passionate Norwegian and Danish warriors spread the fame of their wrath throughout all of Europe and forced the continent's inhabitants to defend themselves. However, the lack of any defensive organisational capability among the later Carolingians and the ruling elite rightly led to the dissatisfaction of their subjects; consequently, certain enterprising 'friends' (Latin: *comitas*, i.e. counts), such as Count Eudes of Paris, took charge of those who wished to fight and possessed the strength to do so. The people wished to see energetic leaders at the helm and rejected the submissive, legitimate monarchists. The feudal lords had seized power in Europe.

The question of who the feudal lords were has been discussed in detail. The only point we need to note here is that the people who inherited benefices and fiefs in the 9th century were selected by the early Carolingians on the basis of their abilities. However, as feudalism began to develop and was officially recognised, Charles Martel and Pépin the Short required capable aides; these people were not merely motivated by money

14 Chemical stimulants were also used in Central Asia. The Basmachi would rub opium on their horses' noses before an attack, and they themselves would consume cannabis to eliminate the feeling of fear.

They set to work. “Nullum officio sine beneficio.”¹⁵ During wartime, only those who are energetic, proactive, courageous, and willing to risk their lives in return for a good reward are sent on dangerous missions. It follows, then, that the first feudal lords were passionate individuals, and their numbers were not particularly significant until the 9th century. This raises an important question: were they remnants of the second phase of the rise—that is, the legacy of the Great Migrations—or had the incubation period of a new wave of passioners come to an end, and were the passionate ones now emerging? It is highly likely that here, just as in the 3rd–4th centuries with the rise of Byzantium in the eastern part of the Roman Empire, a new impulse has superimposed itself upon an unfinished old process. However, in the 9th century, the new passioners displaced the previous ones—or, more accurately, took their place. This is also evident from the shift in ethnic dominance. In the 9th century, the first ‘nations’ of the Middle Ages emerged in Europe. (K. Marx touches upon this subject in his ‘Chronological Sketches’).

15. The Birth of Europe’s ‘ ’

At the time of the fall of the Carolingian Empire, Charles—one of the emperor’s grandsons who had gathered at Ver-len—was proclaimed King of the French, whilst Ludwig was proclaimed King of the Germans. Until then, their subjects had been ‘Romans of German origin’, that is to say, German by birth but Roman in official terms. Being Roman in legal terms was nothing new. Indeed, there were Gallic Romans, Spanish Romans, Illyrian Romans, and so on. However, the legal preference for this new type of union, which combined elements of origin and language, indicates the emergence of a new ethnic dominance—that is, the principle whereby a new generation of people began to unite as a society. Consequently, the fragmentation of the Western European super-ethnos can—and indeed must—be viewed as the formation of ‘nations’ rather than communities, tribes or city-states.

15 No service is rendered without compensation. (Lat.)

16 One must not confuse the modern meaning of the word ‘nation’ with its medieval meaning. For words often change their meaning. However, this is a philological matter which we cannot address here in terms of time and place.

Europe's ethnic mosaic is a consequence of the Great Migrations, which occurred during a period when the 'passioner' effect favoured the survival of the 'passioners' and thus the growth of 'passioner' tension.

The 'nations' of the Middle Ages, although they were people who reflected the true characteristics of the descendants of the named ethnic groups, did not belong to the ancient Germanic tribes, the Celtic clans, or the Italic communities. Had the old traditions not disappeared, the concept of a 'super-ethnic unity' would never have emerged. However, the old ethnic systems could not survive in an environment where 'passioners'—those who sought 'career and opportunity' not for their kinsmen but for themselves—had emerged, armed with swords and spears. As a result of this ethnic diversity, it was easy for these 'passioners' to find lords seeking reliable comrades-in-arms rather than docile subjects; consequently, their fellow tribesmen lacked the power to halt this process. What these passioners needed was not to swim in the sea like the Scandinavians, but to reach beyond their country's borders to seize freedom, take risks and succeed.

To prevent the storm that engulfed Western Europe in the 9th and 10th centuries from degenerating into a 'Brownian motion' that would lead to humanity mindlessly slaughtering one another, there was a need for a social organisation fuelled by an ethnic dominant and, consequently, a sufficient amount of ideology. At the outset of the Passionate Age, certain dominant beliefs existed. Some of these had been inherited from grey-haired elders, whilst others were reflected in newly adopted religious systems. The Scandinavians believed in the gods of Valhalla, whilst the Slavs believed that Aktanrı and Karatanrı had been at war with one another since time immemorial. Based on the teachings of Egyptian missionaries who travelled step by step through Rome, the Burgundians became Aryans; the Franks, Catholics; and the Celts, Orthodox. Most feudal lords believed in nothing other than their own whims and interests. Among the peasants and the lower classes, however, a secret cult of Satanism had already spread by the 11th century, led by the priests. The priests were no less passionate than the feudal lords and merchants.

These 'loose cannons', cut off from their own people, served as the cement holding together traditions that bore no resemblance to one another and were likely entirely unrelated. The barons adopted a Sarmatian tactic from the Hungarians—one that was ancient in Asia but new in Europe—and...

They had adopted the charging tactics of the heavy-armoured cavalry. The villagers had borrowed longbows from the Celts—capable of shooting arrows 450 metres—whose well-tempered arrowheads could pierce primitive leather breastplates and even knee-guards. Priests travelled to Córdoba to study theology and the Orthodox Christian doctrines of the Eastern Church, as well as ancient Hebrew and Greek, from Jewish rabbis who served the Umayyad caliphs of Al-Andalus. Merchants, having grown wealthy through the fur and silk trade, acted as intermediaries between the Muslim Arabs and the pagan Slavs. And all these people had tied their fates not to the villages where they were born, but to the kings on the throne who would protect and enrich them.

However, these ‘stray bombs’ did not fly beyond a geographical region bounded by seas to the north, west and south, but instead headed for the desolate frontiers to the east, where a perpetual January climate prevailed. The cold winters of Eastern Europe had never appealed to them; on the contrary, they had frightened them. They had realised that whilst travelling there was possible, settling there was an unpleasant prospect.

Thus, the new super-ethnos was born amidst diverse landscape conditions. However, this landscape had been shaped into a monolithic entity by the activities of the Passioners—who had arrived in the region earlier and, over the course of several generations, had altered not only Europe’s political map but also its ethnic structure. This new super-ethnic unity needed a name such that the vague sentiment the word conveyed would become ingrained in the members’ very being. And so it took the name ‘Christian World’.

Let us note once again that the rise of the ‘Passioner’ followed a chronological parallelism along an axis stretching from the north-east to the south-west, encompassing Scandinavia, West Germany, Northern France and North-Western Spain. No genes were introduced from Scandinavia to Austria; indeed, there was no instance of cultural borrowing either. Here too, the cause of the Passioner movement lies beyond the boundaries of humanity’s known history, that is, within the framework of natural history. Italy lay outside the boundaries of the region where the Passioner movement emerged. Consequently, at the beginning of the 10th century, when Northern Europe began to boil over, the French turned against the cruel Carolingians and the Germans; the Germans against the pagan Magyars and Slavs; the Austrians against the Emir of Tuleytula off the coast of Samor in 900, and in southern France and Italy, they fought with all their war-hungry classes against the Muslims with great success... people, simply—

They lived for food, drink, success and fantasies of beautiful women. They were paying a very high price for the pleasures and indulgences of coarse people. Imperial power had vanished, whilst papal authority existed in name only. Relationships between people were based solely on self-interest; egoism had taken hold of everyone; the clergy, along with the laity, had begun to share the same fear. In the churches, there was hardly anyone living as the faith required. Religion was confined to the performance of certain rites, and in the monasteries, nothing remained of the ideal order.”¹⁷

The Northerners were acting in accordance with the corrupt moral principles of the Cluny Black-Abbot Order, which had set itself the aim of restoring the Benedictines’ former glory and had succeeded in doing so.

In the Anglo-Saxon kingdom, where the people displayed ethnic unity, the decline of the Passioners was due to a somewhat different cause. Here, constant wars with the Vikings and Celts had taken place. Contrary to common sense, but in keeping with the principles of passionerism, the Anglo-Saxons had resigned themselves to suffering several heavy defeats due to treacherous state officials and a undisciplined army. England was first conquered by the Danes, followed by the Vals and the Scots, who bathed the land in blood, yet the inhabitants offered only a feeble resistance. The full assimilation of the passionate ethnic sub-strata within a new ethnos was realised in France, which was the first to turn towards Western Europe. England and Italy, however, being situated beyond the borders of the Passioner sphere of influence, fell victim to this rise. In the 11th century, the Franco-Normans invaded England, whilst the Franconians and Suevi invaded Italy. However, the imported ‘passioner’ energy exerted a natural influence on the ethnogenesis of these countries with only a very slight chronological delay.

As we mentioned earlier, the region where the ‘Passioner’ movement originated did not coincide with either the region where the feudal system took shape or the Christian cultural sphere. In Italy and England, where the ‘Passioner’ movement was introduced, feudal institutions emerged only later. The movement of the Passioner Scandinavians – the Vikings – developed on the basis of a primitive way of life, and the Scandinavians retained the features of a tribal system until the late Middle Ages. Although other feudal institutions—such as the inheritance of titles, knighthood, and the status of cities—were not present in these societies, Spain, Norway and Poland exercised authority over the peasants—

17 Veber, *General History*, V/606.

They had not recognised the law of the land. Nevertheless, despite certain regional differences, the ethnic groups of Western Europe were united not by political ties, but rather by ideological ties—namely, the ideology of being Catholic—which had also encompassed the Slavs and Scandinavians by the 10th century. These ideological ties had provided an elastic framework for the integrity of the new super-ethnic system; however, when the second (acmatic) phase of ethnogenesis began in the 11th century, those living at the time clearly saw how this served as a unifying factor. And so, as members of the ‘Christian World’, they organised the First Crusade against colonial Spain.

Despite linguistic and cultural differences, and even the chronic hostilities stemming from old ethnic rivalries and differing political aims, the French, Germans, Normans, Italians, Swedes and Spaniards set aside their “ego” in their dealings with the “foreigners”, namely the Arabs and Greeks. The super-ethnos had not only come into being but had also become self-aware.

16. On the Eve of the Great Schism

Byzantium, as a political entity, lost the territories of the Western Roman Empire very rapidly; yet, as a cultural entity, it maintained its influence there until the 9th century. Whilst the years 843 and 867 might be cited as critical periods, the correct period is the timeframe between these two dates. Let us clarify.

The Goths who invaded Italy and Spain, and the Lombards who succeeded them, were Aryans (followers of the Arian sect). The Volohs (the name given to Latin-speaking Europeans), who constituted the indigenous population, were Orthodox. Ethnically, they had nothing in common with the Greeks; yet, as a cultural complex, the Church kept them within the framework of the Byzantine super-ethnos. The Franks and Anglo-Saxons, who had integrated into this system, had also adopted Orthodoxy from the Roman throne, which they had helped secure victory over Arianism.

Although the Gauls and Britons were not in a position to compete with the machinations of Byzantine diplomacy, the cultural exchange of the golden age reduced Western Europe to the status of a province of Byzantium, with its capital at Constantinople. Let us say that the course of ethnogenesis...

Throughout the two centuries of the Byzantine Empire's decline, it allowed thousands of Slavs living on the Balkan Peninsula—which it had itself abandoned—to cross its fortified borders stretching along the Danube; let us suppose that the Nestorians and Monophysites submitted to the Arabs, and let us suppose that the flat-nosed, feeble-minded emperor returned to the throne with the aid of the hostile Bulgars. But the city walls would still stand tall, the priests would still teach their congregation to bow before the icons, and Justinian II would lose his throne once more—this time along with his life. For courage, art and justice emerge victorious from every upheaval.

Yet they too suddenly crumbled. But not from blows from without, but from the emperor's unexpected claim to power. Shortly after Leo III's heroic victory over the Arab fleet (717), in 726, he raised his hand against the sacred art of icons. This marked the shattering of the ethnic spirit and behavioural stereotype that had sustained the cultural tradition—the lifeblood of the Byzantine people. The Isaurian emperors, relying on a small number of soldiers from Asia Minor, had set out to strip the people of the values for which they had lived, suffered, fought and worshipped up to that day. They did whatever was necessary to poison their subjects' lives and render them meaningless, yet the people rejected them with respect and affection.

It was at this point that the allure of Byzantine culture faded. The western provinces, with their own kings at their head, remained loyal to the Orthodox faith. Meanwhile, the Anatolian realm—whose borders were protected by fortresses reinforced with garrisons—severed its ties with Constantinople, the capital of the Christian world, whilst remaining loyal to its own satraps. Thus began the fragmentation of Byzantine ethnogenesis, a process defined by the history of culture, art and religion.

Iconoclasm was, in essence, the ideological corollary of the monarchist revolution. Pope Gregory II (715–731) regarded the policy of Leo III as an attempt to unite imperial and ecclesiastical power in a single hand, which amounted to the outright destruction of the Eastern Christian worldview. In reality, however, the emperor based his relations with the Church solely on the views of the Council of Sofia; this council, however, merely reflected his personal views, which were already subject to the scrutiny of other councils.

Leo III had realised this and had begun to seek legal grounds for his position. By 726, iconoclasm had become the backbone of imperial policy

. By 730, iconodulism was being tried. By 754, during the reign of Constantine V, the Iconoclastic Council had been convened at Chalcedon [Kadıköy].

However, this was not an ecumenical council in which both clergy and laity were required to participate, but merely a gathering attended by the clergy. The Byzantine people, for their part, were firmly committed to a particular viewpoint. Priests, women, intellectuals, sailors—all had loved and respected the image and likeness of God in the icon; but they had never loved a mask or a portrait. The historian I. Zonaras, when describing Constantine, says: 'He is neither Christian, nor Greek, nor Jew; but a composite of all vices.' However, ordinary people, unaware of the convoluted paths, accepted the version that Iconoclasm had Jewish origins.¹⁸

The iconoclasts gained a certain measure of vitality for a time and, utilising the economic resources accumulated up to their own era alongside the ethnic inertia of nationalism, even achieved victories against the Arabs and Bulgars. However, in the 9th century, failures followed one after another: in 806, Harun al-Rashid reduced Asia Minor to ruins; in 811, the Bulgars routed the Byzantine army, killing Emperor Nikephoros, and in 813, they advanced as far as the walls of Constantinople. By 810, the Byzantines would lose control of Venice and Dalmatia, and in the West—where Charlemagne had re-established the Western Roman Empire in 800, yet which was marked by the iconoclastic controversies that persisted from 726 to 843—they would lose their dominance. As Rome remained within the borders of the Byzantine Empire, the papacy directed the fate of Eastern church culture, including iconoclasm.

The iconoclastic movement in the West was weaker than that in the East. In the West, the leaders of this movement were Claudius, Bishop of Turin, and Agobardus, Bishop of Lyon. Both were Spanish. They were enemies of dualism and of those who worshipped the statue of St Augustine.¹⁹ Opposing them were not only popes and kings who defended iconodulism, but also the masses. More importantly, whilst these debates, which had naturally lost their momentum in the 8th century, reignited in the 9th century; and even when the essence of the debate had vanished alongside the revival of iconodulism, the activity of Western people,

18 Çiçerov, I. S. *Byzantine Historical Writings: 'Chronography' of Theophanes, 'Breviary' of Nikephoros*. Moscow, 1980, p. 142.

19 Arsenyev, I. *From Charlemagne to the Reformation*, 1909, I/12–24.

It was this that led to the division of the churches in 867 and to Pope Nicholas I and Archbishop Phokas excommunicating one another. Here, it is clearly evident that the 'age' difference between the Greeks and the 'Franks' played a role: Byzantium had entered the inertial phase of ethnogenesis, whilst the West had reached the passionate phase of ascent as a result of its choice of driving force.

The opponents of the Byzantine iconoclasts found themselves in a difficult position. They needed to organise themselves for the archpriest candidates who were preparing to receive theological training and learn Greek and Hebrew, but they did not wish to send their young people to Constantinople. For this reason, they sent the young people preparing for religious education to Córdoba and Seville, where Jewish rabbis were under the patronage of Arab caliphs who were interested in language and philosophy. It could be said that the teachers there were not instilling Judaism or even the Talmud in their pupils; but they were readily incorporating certain Jewish traditions into the fundamental tenets of Christianity; they were hammering home the Trinity and the divinity of Jesus into their minds.²⁰ Later, upon returning to their homelands, these young men maintained friendly relations with Jews living in southern France and Italy who possessed sufficient material means to occupy a respectable position within society. Furthermore, the Jews were highly educated and had translated works by Arab authors for their Christian friends. Based on ethno-cultural contacts and religious indifference, the views that all three religions were the same and that the criterion of truth could be grasped by reason emerged and spread. This logic formed the fundamental basis for the Scholastics of the period between Johannes Scott and Abélard, and indeed for those who followed. In other words, what was at stake here was an ethno-cultural chimera, or the synthesis of the three components at a super-ethnic level.

In the East, however, having emerged from the phase of rupture, a reverse process had taken place, one necessary for the formation of the inertial phase of ethnogenesis. The superfluous had been cast aside, whilst that which had crystallised in the fires of past wars had been disseminated. The rationalism of the iconoclasts was deemed superfluous, whereas Orthodoxy—which served as the bridge between earthly and heavenly life—and art were regarded as crystalline. Iconoclasts persecuted in the capital had fled to outlying regions such as Chersonesus, Dalmatia and the Danube basin. By spreading Orthodoxy amongst the Khazars and Slavs, they had prepared these peoples for future baptism. In the 9th century, travelling amongst the Slavs and, to some extent, the Khazars, Cyril and

20 Age., pp. 144–145.

They continued along the straight path trodden by Methodius. However, they had failed to succeed in the West, where the fervour of the indigenous peoples was reaching its peak. Over the 300 years spanning the 8th to the 11th centuries, the two Christian traditions had drifted considerably apart. For whilst peace was established at the Seventh Ecumenical Council in the East, the West continued to wage a struggle over solutions; consequently, the Greeks and the 'Latins' had ceased to regard one another as people sharing the same faith.

We need to pause here for a moment. As for the reason: the problem we had set out was relatively simple. This is because we had proceeded from the principle that the 'ancient' super-ethnos (the Helleno-Romans) was divided into two: the Byzantines and the 'Europeans' (the Romano-Germans). In this context, we deliberately overlooked the influences of other super-ethnos groups, such as the Muslim (Arab-Berber) and European (Hungarian) super-ethnoses. This was because these influences did not disrupt the fundamental trajectory of ethnogenesis. A synchronic survey would have sufficed to understand this; however, a survey of the period of the Crusades reveals that everything changes fundamentally, and the method initially applied does not lead us to the sought-after solution.

Firstly, we are confronted with the problem of contact at the super-ethnic level, which requires a diachronic examination. Despite their geographical distance, we observe a form of ethnic integration that carries a negative connotation, the likes of which has never been recorded elsewhere. To resolve the problem, a different scale—that is, a broader scope—is required, but this inevitably reduces the chronological framework of our research by approximately fivefold. Consequently, instead of a thousand years of ethnic history, we will have a single episode spanning the 9th to 11th centuries. Essentially, we need no more than that. For the formative period of modern European nations begins in the 14th century, which is an entirely different matter.

The problem we have identified has been resolved. The transition period from the 'Roman World' (*Pax Romana*) to the 'Christian World' (*Chrétienté*) (from the 4th to the 9th century) spanned 500 years. It has been understood that this gap in ethnic history was filled in the West by ethnic contacts, and in the East by the rise of Byzantium, which took the place of the former Byzantine Empire. From this point onwards, the "Eastern Christian" and "Western Christian" super-ethnic groups never managed to unite. However, as early as the 11th century,

that is, after the actual fragmentation, the alluring charm of the past began to permeate Europe via rather circuitous routes and developed to the extreme detriment of the Western Christians.

17. Discord

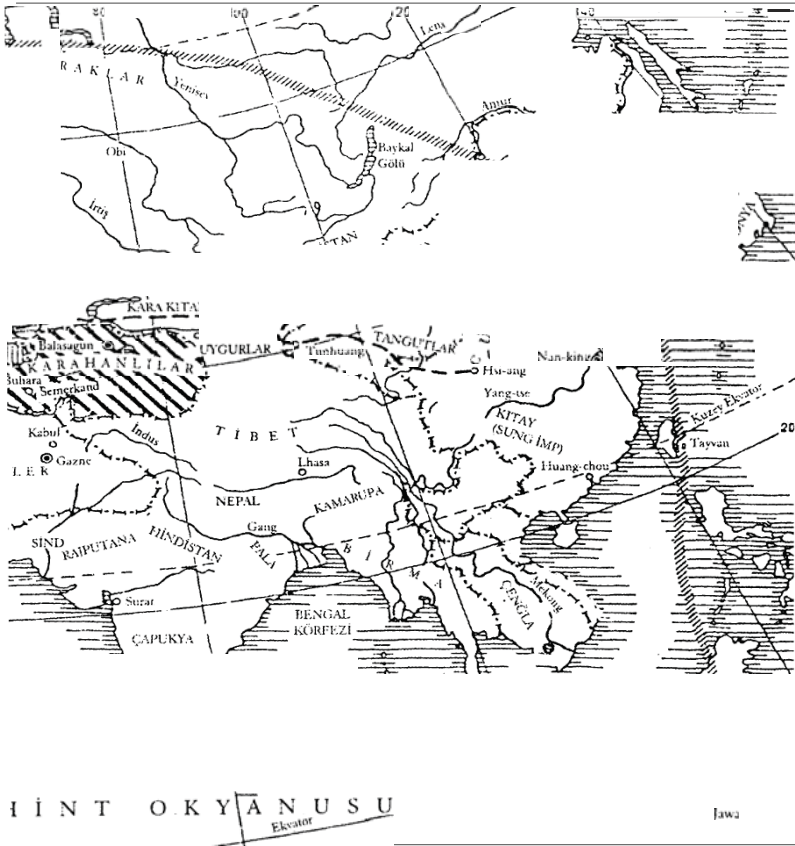
The period described has been examined from a one-sided perspective, but this was done deliberately. In fact, in the 11th century, there was a transition from the ascendant phase of the super-ethnic system's passionate tension to the explosive phase of fiery individuals. This process, however, was by no means chaotic. By the middle of the period, urban and rural artisans were being harassed by their fanatical neighbours. These neighbours were conservatively rigid to the point of foolishness; they shied away from technological innovations and from asserting their rights as stipulated in treaties; instead, they preferred to wage defensive wars against aggressors. A moderate form of rule was their ideal; but this ideal was not always achievable.

Passionaries were springing up everywhere, even amongst villagers and townspeople, and their numbers were considerable. Consequently, it was not particularly costly to dispatch them on the Crusades, but not all of them were eager to go to war. For there were plenty of interesting things to do in their own countries as well. For example, dealing with heretics and the struggle against them.

This was the state of affairs among the ruling classes. The nobility were required to perform military service and, much like the training imposed on athletes today, were subjected to gruelling drills even in peacetime until they were completely exhausted. For if they failed to undergo this training, they would be among the first to die in the event of war. The clergy had an even harder time. This was because their education was conducted not in their native language, but in Latin. In short, as most people were unable to contribute to the development of technology and education, production barely developed at all, and consequently, production relations could not stabilise.

Wars, coups, the emergence of heretics and, finally, the Crusades – to what factor were all these events attributable? People often risk death in events they participate in of their own volition.

There is little difficulty here. The spontaneous process of development of productive forces, rather than the logic of events at the personal or even ethnic level,



There^{is} a fact that the choice of this or that tendency (^{is})(not) (dependent) (on)(free) (will). To invent is, without a doubt, an exceptionally new difficulty. Very few people possess such characteristics. It is more appropriate to select one of the previously invented dominant models, in which case we will enter the ethno-cultural . We are familiar with this field. Now, we will discuss to provide the necessary outline of the topics, but— we can move from theoretical explanations to historical and ethnographic facts.

All the super-ethnic groups mentioned above were in constant contact with one another. The energy that gave rise to and sustained them, however, passed from one to the other, just like a liquid in communicating vessels

. This transfer sometimes took the form of military clashes, sometimes of mutual cultural exchange, and sometimes occurred in entirely different ways, such as transplanting one's own way of life, views and feelings into a foreign environment, or through religious propaganda.

On the other hand, however, there was no trace of a sense of unity within these ethnic groups themselves. Emperors were at odds with popes; the French with the English; the Castilian kings with rebellious counts; Italian cities amongst themselves; the cities of Flanders with archbishops; and peasants with feudal lords. Even the Catholic Church was far from monolithic: the scholastics, disciples of Pierre Abélard, were at odds with the mystics following in the footsteps of Bernard of Clairvaux; the Cluniac monks were in conflict with undisciplined archbishops. Yet all these conflicts were manifestations of dialectical unity. For the active passionaries of the Middle Ages, war was life itself; consequently, those who opposed it had no right to live. If such an active passionary perished in a lost conflict, the victorious side would find another to crush, and the process would continue. This is quite agonising; yet the disease of indifference that tore apart the ageing Byzantium of the 12th century lies outside this. For as long as the destructive passion continued to simmer, Byzantium was invincible; it was only after tranquillity was restored that death took it into its embrace.

However, an even more terrifying conflict was unfolding in the Islamic world. There, as in Constantinople, the moment of zero passion had not yet arrived. But passionate energy had 'changed character' (though not everywhere) and had been elevated to the status of a false principle of influence. Instead of the eternal dialectical clashes in Western Europe and the weakening of the rhythm of life's processes, as in Byzantium, annihilation had made itself felt here due to opposing factions. It was this Eastern microbe that would spread to Italy and France, where the Albigensian Wars began. In the 12th century, only the Mongols had not yet encountered the anti-system virus.

IV. THE NOMADIC SUPER- IC ETHNOS

18. A Journey Through the Centuries: The

In the first millennium AD, there was another super-ethnos. It had no territory, no central government and no army... but it existed nonetheless. The Jews, scattered from Germany to Iran, lived whilst maintaining internal unity despite their external differences. Among them were people with different cultural traditions, different views and different behavioural stereotypes. Eastern Jews did not resemble those in Byzantium or Germany; yet we still refer to them not as an ethnos, but as a super-ethnos. Finally, in the 9th century, their turn to speak had come. However, as this 'voice' was heard in Khazaria and played a significant role in the Khazars' destiny, we must investigate how and why this came to pass. To do so, we must delve into the depths of the past and focus on the fate of the Eastern Jewish community and its connections with Iran.

The ethnic history of the Jews is complex and multifaceted; yet the transformations brought about by passive-aggressive impulses have not altered them any less than they have altered all other nations. Indeed, even phenomena more enduring than their culture, religious dogmas, and ethnic stereotypes have changed; yet, the ethnonyms that portray them at times as sinners, at times as ignorant, and even at times as masters have been preserved.

The legendary accounts in the first books of the Bible, regarding the ambiguous relations between the ancestors of the Jews and the Sumerians, and subsequently with Egypt

1 As a historical source, the Bible has come under serious criticism because the fifth book refers to two distinct gods: one, Elohim (the One God), and the other, Yahweh (who appeared in pillars of fire). (See Reder D. G., *History of the Ancient World*. Moscow, 1970, p. 172). It follows that this society originally had a complex structure. The Jews became a monolithic ethnic group—

Although they provide vague information, this has no bearing on our subject. Historically recorded as existing in the 14th century BC, the Habiru tribes began to conquer the defenceless and peace-loving Canaanites in an extremely ruthless manner, but they likely encountered resistance from the Philistines, who were probably one of the 'coastal peoples' of the ancient Achaeans or Hittites. The war with the Canaanites and Philistines continued until the 10th century BC (the acute phase of ethnogenesis). However, King David (1004–965) achieved final victory and captured Jerusalem, where his son Solomon would later build the temple. However, following Solomon's death, the kingdom was divided into two. In 586 BC, Jerusalem was conquered by the Babylonian ruler Nebuchadnezzar, and the captives were taken to Babylon. Thus began the famous diaspora (dispersion and life in exile), or, to put it another way, the inert phase of Jewish ethnogenesis.

The Jews continued to live in Babylon, and when Cyrus permitted them to return to their homeland in 539 BC, very few took advantage of this. The Jewish colony in Babylon had become wealthier and more populous than that in Palestine.

The Jews dispersed throughout Mesopotamia and Susiana,² where they were in close contact with the Persians. Xerxes's famous anti--deva edict, which prohibited the worship of tribal deities, is said to be reflected in the biblical book of "Sifr", which records that Mardo-hei, at the instigation of his niece Esfir—who was the king's captive—organised a massacre against the Macedonians³ and other opposing Jews fighting for the rule of the Persian Shah-i Shahân.⁴

Afterwards, they presented themselves as an anthropological mixture. Those who came from Ur were of the Haldelian-Sumerian type: short in stature, stocky, with shiny hair and thick lips. Those of African descent were found in Egypt. The Semites are tall, robust, with straight noses and narrow faces. This is the result of intermingling with the ancient Arabs, namely the Khaldeans. A large proportion of the Jews are also of the Armenian type, having lived in Canaan, Syria and Asia Minor. The people we refer to today as Jews are these very people. These distinct racial characteristics merely demonstrate the complexity of the Jewish ethnogenesis process, but this has absolutely no connection to ethnic identification. For ethnicity and race are concepts belonging to different systems.

- 2 Tumeniev, A. I. *The Jews in Antiquity and the Middle Ages*. Moscow, 1922, p. 63. Hereafter: Tumeniev, *The Jews*.
- 3 Macedonia came under the rule of the Persian Empire between 490 and 465 BC, and during this brief period the Macedonians served the ruler Artaxerxes.
- 4 Tumeniev, *Jews*, p. 80.

However, Mordecai's victory was short-lived. When the Persians began to treat the Jews coldly, the latter willingly opened their arms to Alexander the Great of Macedonia, and thus neither the Persian king nor his Hellenistic allies clashed with the Jews. In this situation, the Jews and Greeks remaining within the borders of the allied Seleucid state engaged in bloody conflicts with one another. The wars culminated in the victory of the Jews who had established a kingdom in Palestine under the Hasmonean dynasty. The Jews of Palestine and the Jews of the Diaspora gradually drifted apart, becoming 'two distinct nations'.⁵ The destinies of these two nations were also distinct from one another.

Until the campaign of Alexander the Great, the peoples of Hellas and the Near East existed in isolation from one another. Egyptian and Babylonian culture had begun to quietly wither away under the patronage of the Persian king. Although Babylon still stood, there was scarcely a trace left of the Babylonians. Although the Nile River still carried silt to the Egyptians' fields, all that remained of the once-glorious country were tombs, apart from the fellahs and a small group of priests. Apart from the Persians, Sogdians, Bactrians and the peoples of Asia Minor, some small Jewish groups in Palestine, the Daylamites in Elburz, and probably the Cilician bandits and Parthians had managed to survive.

Following the Macedonian conquest, all these peoples intermingled, giving rise to a new civilisation known as 'Hellenism'. As this period has been written about at length, there is no need for us to recount the same era here. Rather, we must explain in a satisfactory manner what it signifies for ethnogenesis. During the rule of the Seleucid dynasty, the Ptolemies were not ethnic groups possessing an original structure or their own distinctive behavioural stereotypes. As for their territories, Greek-speaking people lived in their beautiful cities, whilst those who understood Greek resided in the villas surrounding the cities. Both groups were loyal to the regime; for it provided them with the peace they sought. However, they harboured no particular feelings towards the rulers at the helm. The Macedonians were regarded by the local population as foreigners and were not particularly well-liked. Internal ties had been lost due to the establishment of common markets and the settlement of a shared Hellenic civilisation. The peoples had been absorbed into the Macedonian body. The sole exception was the Jewish people, who had gained their independence under the leadership of the Maccabean dynasty.

5 Ibid., p. 216.

he would have said. But we shall not speak of him now. By the 1st century BC, Rome had brought Syria and Egypt under its control. As no one resisted, nothing had changed. Only the Macedonian officials had been replaced by Italians. Admittedly, the tax burden had increased slightly, but the increase in production brought about by Roman laws was able to offset this difference. The cities had grown and were filled with sub-passioners living in the fertile region where the village economy had developed excessively. For nature, unspoilt by technology, was capable of sustaining not only the labourers but also the parasites. However, once the passioner impulse passed through here, a new process of ethnogenesis had begun.

In the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire, various forms of polytheism had emerged. To dwell on the ideas circulating at that time would divert us from our subject and lead us in a different direction. Let us simply note that the Christian community, having absorbed the majority of the passionate adherents of these circulating beliefs and succeeded in spreading far and wide, emerged victorious from among these ideas. Weak-willed individuals were of no use to the Christian communities. Indeed, a saying had even spread concerning them: 'I know your deeds. You are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either cold or hot; but since you are lukewarm, I will spit you out of my mouth.' (Revelation 3:15–16). Thus, the first consortium of this new type of Passioners was founded on this principle.

By the mid-2nd century, however, they had coalesced among themselves into a new sub-ethnic group or 'Umma of Jesus'.

The chief enemies of the new population were not the Roman officials who confused Christians with Jews, but the urban rabble of sub-passioners, who were grappling with the passionaries and spiritual asceticism by lodging written denunciations. They lodged so many denunciations that Trajan eventually banned their processing. At this time, Christians were being persecuted under a law prohibiting all forms of communal organisation. For this law did not ban the worship of the crucified god, but rather organisations such as the shoemakers' guild or the fire brigade.

At this stage, the ethnic group is like a foetus in its mother's womb. Essentially, whilst emerging as a new entity, it is not even aware of this fact. The first apostles regarded themselves as Galileans. They had heard that they came from origins different from those of their relatives, but they had incorporated this affiliation into their sacred identities. However, even such a

was sufficient for the Jews to cease regarding them as members of their own nation. Indeed, as early as the year 35, they stoned to death Stephanos, the chief priest of the Christian community; from that time onwards, the enmity between Christians and Jews intensified to such an extent that it could never be erased.

The activities of the Apostle Paul had led many people from different nations to join the Christian community. Whilst the first generation of Christians saw themselves as members of a community, they were also conscious of their ethnic origins. For example, the centurion Cornelius knew he was Roman; but Dionysius the Areopagite saw himself as a Greek. However, a shared destiny had united the members of the Christian community, particularly during the years of persecution. In particular, the fact that Christians were torn apart by wild beasts at the hands of the Romans led to the revolt of the Jew Bar Kokhba (Star of Sinai) in 135. Following this event, the traditional ties between the new ethnic unity and the old were completely severed, though the ancient traditions were supplemented through reforms. The Jews who survived Roman persecution had adopted the exegetical traditions established by the 'Mishnah'—the work of Rabbi Judah ha-Nasi of Tiberias, who laid the foundations of the Talmud in 219. Thus was born Rabbinism, which opposed Christianity. The Babylonian communities, composed of diverse ethnic backgrounds, approached Hellenistic and Persian philosophy with caution. Gnostic teachings, including Kabbalah, had spread amongst these communities. Thus, the teachings of the Galilean Christ, which gave rise to two super-ethnic groups with different dominants and destinies, had finally separated Diaspora Judaism from one another.

Unlike the Jews, the pagans did not display any ideological opposition towards the early Christians. Faith in the ancient tribal idols, which were regarded as divine, had already lost its validity with the development of philosophy, which had also eroded the cults of the most intellectual segments of Hellenic and Roman society. During the Principate, the cult of Jupiter had become merely a venerable tradition reflecting loyalty to the government, thus severing the mystical bond between god and man. In essence, it was the emperors themselves—who demanded that their own statues be worshipped in the temples—who dealt the fatal blow to the old religions. Yet no one could sincerely believe in the debauched Vitellius, the immoral Otho, the feeble-minded Gaius Caesar Caligula, or similar 'gods'. Moreover, sacrifices offered to them were not equivalent to those offered to Jupiter, Mars, Venus and Mercury.

When it was announced that it should be presented, no one took it seriously. The majority of the intellectual class had turned to atheism, whilst the lower classes had organised their own spiritual lives.

The persecution of Christians during the first 150 years was either carried out on the basis of reports from the Jews or in accordance with Trajan's edict banning all kinds of sects. Although he showed little interest in Christianity, Trajan prohibited denunciations against them; their slaughter, however, only led to his personally declaring his membership of the Christian community. Thus, Christianity spread throughout the empire by absorbing those who were thirsty for the truth and consumed by the fire of passion. As these passionate believers concentrated in regions such as Syria, Asia Minor and Palestine, these areas became fertile ground for the seeds of the Eastern Roman Christian faith.

19. Conversion to Christianity is a Symbol of Ethnogenesis

The incubation period was now over. By 155 AD, Christians had made it clear that they wished to engage in debate. Justin the Philosopher had rejected the belief in idolatry, condemned the sacrifice of animals, and formulated Christian doctrine in a manner distinct from Judaism and the philosophical systems of Greece. Christian communities had coalesced into sub-ethnic groups, and the imperial administration was forced to deal with this community. From the end of the 2nd century

Until the early 4th century, Christians were required to demonstrate a sign of political loyalty—namely, the recognition of the emperor as a god and the offering of sacrifices at his altar; whilst they guaranteed their political allegiance, they categorically refused to agree ideologically. Although they were prepared to obey and serve as subjects, they could not accept that a former centurion, senator, schemer, immoral person or murderer should be recognised as a god. The authorities, unwilling to settle for such half-hearted obedience, had decided to fulfil the desire of the urban rabble, who demanded the Christians be eradicated. However, the unfortunate reality was that the most devout, honest and courageous legionaries were Christians; whilst the most treacherous, selfish, cowardly in battle and even those who would sometimes betray their own commanders were pagans. This situation, naturally,

This led to a schism: those who accepted the new religious situation joined the Christian community; whilst essentially abandoning their old faith, they replaced it with the principle of absolute sycophancy, whilst those who did not accept the new faith remained heretics.

In 313, Constantine, having defeated his rival Maxentius with the help of the Christians, issued the Edict of Milan, which officially recognised Christianity as a religion. Faced with this situation, the rabble in the cities immediately converted to Christianity and vented their frustrations by putting the heretical philosophers to the sword. The entire fourth century passed in this manner.

Christians and pagans clashed with one another using rather peculiar methods. Neither the Neoplatonic philosophers such as Yamvlix, Libanius, Hypatia, Hemerius and Themistius, nor the Stoics, nor the Mithraist Emperor Julian the Apostate-tupnik, nor the 'Church Fathers' such as Basil the Great and Gregory the Theologian, nor Christian masters such as Origen and Marcion, nor Gnostics such as Vasilides and Valentinus—none of them defiled themselves with base acts against those who thought differently. For this reason, the rabble from Rome, Antioch and Alexandria, the soldier-emperors, demagogues, uncultured priests and corrupt officials took part in the slaughter of the Christians first, and then of the heretical philosophers. It is not difficult to see that the urban underclasses, as well as the mercenary military commanders, were less concerned with matters of the spiritual life than anyone else. These were no longer the descendants of the ancient Romans and Hellenes; rather, they were the mixed-race merchant-artisan populace of Hellenistic centres, who eradicated the seedlings of the new spiritual life and the traces of ancient cultures with equal fervour. Constantine's successors, who never firmly established themselves on the throne, believed that their interests lay in fulfilling the desires of the masses and their leaders. Constantine's son, Constantius, ordered the confiscation of the property of heretics and the imposition of the death penalty on those who offered sacrifices. Incidentally, as a punishment for rejecting the teachings of Arius, he sentenced Christians to severe exile. Indeed, after 381, Theodosius began to exile the Arians in the same manner. In 382, Gratianus ordered the senatorial curiae to bring the triumphal altar—the symbol of Rome's power. The final attempt to save paganism, made between 392 and 394, was thwarted by Theodosius, who had the rebellious commanders Eugenius and Arbogast executed.

The Western Church had inherited a very heavy legacy from the early period. The peasantry of Italy, Spain and Gaul, untouched by the influence of the Reformation, had adopted the religion that came their way with complete indifference.

The peasantry of Italy, Spain and Gaul, untouched by missionary zeal, had adopted the religion that came their way with utter indifference. Indeed, they had defended the old religion with weary persistence, thus allowing pagan cults to survive in Western Europe until the 7th century. Consequently, in the mountainous regions inhabited by people from the East, fervour had reached boiling point and Christianity was practised with a degree of zeal. The genetic drift of Passionism had given rise to a fanatical and fanatical population that knew how to capitalise on this fervent power, propelling Constantine to the throne.

All the dross inherited by the Byzantines from the past had been consumed by the flames of Passionerism's explosive phase; the sub-Passioner rabble in the cities had breathed their last. The outlying regions inhabited by pagans—the Germans in the West, the Slavs on the Balkan Peninsula, and the Muslims who emerged in Arabia when the turn of the Passioner impulse came—had been seized by this new ethnic group, which ascended rapidly through its entire phase of ascent until it became a super-ethnos.

However, by the 4th century, Christianity had transcended ethnic boundaries as an ideology. In Europe, the Goths, Burgundians, Suevi and Vandals; in Asia, the Armenians and Georgians; and in Africa, the Abyssinians had all become Christians. These ethnic groups had never come into contact with Roman rule, Roman culture or the Roman system; consequently, they remained distinct entities, not forming a single nation. The division of the Christian community into Athanasian and Arian factions played a key role here. The Germans had adopted a form of Christianity based on the teachings of Arius, whilst within the empire, the teachings of Nicaea—that is, those of Athanasius—had prevailed. The teachings of Athanasius, which reached their zenith at the Council of Constantinople in 381, had united their adherents into the ethnic unity we call Byzantium. From this date onwards, the Byzantine ethnic group entered its own dynamic phase. Between the 4th and 6th centuries, it expanded by conquering the Transcaucasus and Iran, thereby putting an end to the remnants of ancient cultures that had fragmented into a series of sub-ethnic groups, each preserving its own religious beliefs and largely lacking dogmatic foundations. However, in the 7th century, it lost half of its territory due to internal conflicts and finally reached the inertia phase of ethnogenesis in the 9th century.

20. Let's Return to Judea

Being cut off from one's homeland does not mean being erased from history. The Jews returning from Babylon to Palestine found understanding neither from the Samaritans—the indigenous people who preserved Jewish culture—nor from the Canaanites (Phoenicians) living around the Sea of Tiberias,⁶ nor from the Arabs-Edomites who had come from Naphtali nor from the Arabs and Idumeans living in the former lands of the Philistines in the Gaza region.⁷ However, the Galileans and Idumeans enthusiastically supported the revolt initiated by the Maccabees in 166 BC and fought alongside them against the Macedonians. Upon learning that soldiers were needed for the army, the Jews persuaded these two peoples to return to Judaism by promoting the idea that, although they had once been Jews, unlike the Samaritans, they had lost their faith during the Seleucid period.⁸ Consequently, during the Hasmonean dynasty (152–37 BC), members of the incorporated peoples were called Jews; however, they were second-class citizens.⁹ They, too, responded to this treatment in a manner that led to bloody conflicts.

I. Herod the Great (37–4 BC), despite all the benefits he bestowed upon his country and people, received “love and devotion not from the people of Israel, but only from the Samaritans and the Edomites”, simply because they were foreigners. Indeed, he would even go so far as to say that “just as much as he hated the Jews, he admired the Greeks.” He even shied away from his own children, who were of Jewish descent. This situation would continue until the passionate outburst provided the energy necessary for self-confidence to the inhabitants of Palestine. It was only then that the Idumeans seized the throne of Palestine by expelling the last Hasmoneans; Galilee, meanwhile, became the birthplace of Jesus Christ and a new religion. This new religion was not merely a foreign faith, as T. Mommsen termed it ‘Neo-Judaism’¹⁰. It also stood in opposition to the Judaism that had taken shape through contact with the Hellenists and Romans.

In Galilee, everything was different. There, they hated everything associated with the Greeks and Romans. The first Sicarii (dagger-wielding assassins), terrorists, and

⁶ Strabo. *Geography*. 17 vols. L., 1964, p. 704. Hereafter: *Strabo*.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 703.

⁸ Toynbee, A. *Hellenism*. Oxford, 1959, p. 191.

⁹ Mommsen, T. *History of Rome*. Vol. V. Moscow, 1949, p. 452. Hereafter: Mommsen, *History*.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 441–442.

Those who killed both foreigners and apostates have emerged there. Indeed, Jesus Christ, addressing the Jews, said: “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites and extortioners” (Luke 2:37); “You are of your father the Devil, and you wish to carry out your father’s desires. He has been a murderer from the beginning. He has not remained in the truth, for there is no truth in him. It is only natural that he should lie, for he is a liar and the father of lies” (John 8:44). These are quite categorical characteristics showing that Christian and Jewish behavioural stereotypes do not resemble one another.¹¹ For in the 1st century BC, the Jews were more concerned with filling their own coffers than with serving the Temple in Jerusalem.

Making money was not difficult, but to do so one had to enter the common market of the Hellenistic world and participate in its intrigues and strife. People could engage in trade, but they had to learn Greek, adopt Hellenic culture, adopt their way of life, change their names... in short, it was essential to alter their behavioural patterns. It was these Hellenised Jews who were given the name ‘Sadducees’. They not only took control of the economy and rose to the highest positions in the Hasmonean kingdom, but also assumed the role of its representatives abroad. In Alexandria, where Greeks made up 50 per cent of the population, Jews accounted for 40 per cent, with Egyptians and others making up the remaining 10 per cent. The situation was the same in the mountainous regions of Cyprus and Asia Minor. In other words, the Jews had become part of Hellenistic civilisation and had gradually assimilated into it.

Naturally, this situation severed their ties with the traditional conservatives—namely the Pharisees (the ‘pure’ and ‘righteous’)—and the masses. The latter were particularly opposed to the ruling elite in their midst resembling the Greeks, their most detested enemies. Consequently, the rift along ethnic lines widened steadily, reaching a point where Herod was forced to rely on mercenary soldiers to maintain his rule. The prophets, too, were cursing him. A situation typical of the Obscuration phase. Ultimately, in the first century AD, the people were divided and destroyed.

The Palestinian Jews, having inherited a fair share of their ancestors’ stubbornness and intolerance, clashed with the Romans; yet the Romans, in two campaigns—one in 70 and the other in 132 AD—

11 Julian the Apostate took advantage of the Jews’ hostility towards the ‘Galileans’, that is, the Christians.

They were brutally crushed on several occasions. Consequently, Arabs came and settled in the now-vacant Palestine.¹² The Jews who managed to flee to the western reaches of the empire during these terrible conflicts found peace and a life free from danger there. Moreover, Judaism began to spread within Rome itself through women whose traditional moral bonds had been severed within the empire. This situation had a positive influence on the Romans' behaviour towards the Jews, just as it had towards the Christians.

During the period when blood began to flow like a torrent in the great cities of the Roman Empire, in Greek colonies such as Pantikapaeum, Gorgippia and Tanais, in Armenia¹³ and in the oases of Arabia, the Jews managed to survive. However, these were now the new Jews encountered by the passionist movement in the 1st century, and were therefore contemporaries of the Byzantines and Slavs. Furthermore, they maintained active ties with their Iranian co-religionists, who were under the protection of the Parthian rulers, enemies of Rome. As a result, both communities continued their uninterrupted exchange of ideas and people until the end of the 5th century.¹⁴

And they certainly needed it! Iran was a poor country; yet it owed its very existence to the Jews. The Eastern Roman Empire was wealthy, yet the Greeks were able to compete successfully with the Jews. At that time, ideologies were at the heart of international conflicts. The Bible had now been translated into Greek and was no longer a secret. They had read it with great attention, yet everyone's reaction was different. Some sided with the serpent that had encouraged Eve to become aware of good and evil, and with those who wished to keep people ignorant

12 Mommsen, *History*, V/487.

13 Berlin, I. *The Historical Fate of the Jewish People on the Territory of the Russian Empire*. Pr., 1919, p. 10.

14 The renewed Jewish religious teachings were also founded upon these relationships.

I. By the first century, two traditions of the Talmud had been established: one in Jerusalem and the other the Babylonian Talmud. The Kabbalah, 'formed according to the traditions of the teachings', emerged in the second and third centuries. According to Kabbalah, God, having grown weary of solitude, decided to create the world and humanity from His own breath. By bestowing upon them an exalted spirit, He raised them to the level of God. For this reason, God does not assist them; for "assistance" is a form of charity, and thus a source of shame. They must obtain what they need by their own efforts. (See Lyurenre, H.A. *A Critical History of the Spanish Inquisition*. Vol. II. Moscow, 1936. Day 3, pp. 535–536)

They call God the 'Evil One' (Ophites); some emphasise the material world, and thus claim that the entire visible world does not exist, but merely constitutes an obstacle on the path to the perfection of the spirit, which is the sole positive reality (Gnostics). A third group rejects the Old and New Testaments; they assert that ancient Judaism was the religion of Satan-worshippers (Marcion and his school); a fourth group—the Manichaeans—viewed the world as a battlefield between light and darkness; however, whilst Christians accepted the world and life as created by God, the Manichaeans, holding the opposite view, maintained that darkness was a force that held a portion of the light (the spirit) captive.

Dualism did not gain a foothold in the West. The pagan Plotinus and the Christian Origen established a monistic view based on sound foundations that gained the approval of the intellectuals of the third century; thus, the Gnostics turned to their followers, who formed the rank and file, and consequently their views lost their influence over the Roman society and the broad masses of the ethnic groups that constituted it. In Iran, too, Gnostic-Manichaeism had come up against the solid wall of Zoroastrianism, which regarded life as sacred, viewed existence as a creation of Ahura Mazda, and considered death and non-existence (the annihilation of matter) to be the work of Ahriman. Mani paid for his attempt to continue his teachings with his life. It seemed there was no place in this world for the Gnostic system that rejected life, yet such a place had been found.

On the borders of the great super-ethnic groups—such as Hellenism and Iran, Iran and Turan, and Turan and India—where the independent yet small principalities of the Arabs, the Caucasians and the Hephthalites were situated, those who espoused Gnostic views had found refuge and security. The Jews, who had exchanged Palestine for Mesopotamia, were also among them. Surrounded by the walls erected by the official religions, the Jews reacted vehemently against the evolution of the creative idea, giving rise to the Kabbalah based on ancient traditions, and made room for it within the rigid Talmudic system. Within Kabbalah, there were monistic systems akin to Neoplatonism, dualistic views inherited from the Essenes, and inclinations towards new ideas that had emerged in Persia and Byzantium. As there were many passionate individuals within Babylonian society, the country was consumed by intellectual fervour throughout the 3rd and 4th centuries and actively participated in events relevant to our subject.

21. Incompatibility

Creative bursts of ideas and the subsequent development of Jewish philosophical views led to the emergence of Kabbalah, which embraced open-minded ideas, and to the philosophical and ritual imitation of pre-Mosaic cults of debauchery. However, Neo-Judaism was utterly incompatible with Christian Gnostics. At times, the blood of the first persecuted Christians—such as the chief deacon Stephanos, stoned to death in the year 35, and the victims of the Bar-Kohba fanatics—was shed; at other times, when every flawless logical judgement was deemed sufficient in itself, like a directly observed fact, the audacious Hellenistic intellect, born of rigid logical rules, had driven the Jews away. Since episodes from the Old Testament had frightened Christian neophytes in the face of traditional Judaism, any contact between Christianity and Talmudism was out of the question. For this reason, in the second century, movements emerged among Christians to distinguish between the disciplines of the Old Testament and the New Testament and to prove this distinction with theological arguments. According to this logic, the God of Moses, Yahweh, is certainly not the Elohim addressed by Christ, who was crucified. Consequently, ancient Jewish monotheism essentially bears a resemblance to the worship of the tribal god by the Jews, whilst any resemblance to Christian monotheism is purely imaginary.

The difference between the God of the Old Testament and the God of the New Testament has been formulated by Christian Gnostics as follows: “The former forbids people from eating the fruit of the tree of life; the latter promises to grant the victor the right to eat of the ‘holy cake’.” (Apocalypse 2:17) The former permits illicit relationships and unrestrained procreation; the latter forbids even casting a lustful glance at a woman. The former promises the earth as a reward; the latter promises the heavens. The first makes circumcision and the killing of the defeated obligatory; the second declares both to be forbidden. The first condemns the earth; the second praises it. The first regrets having created humanity; the second does not withhold his love from them. The first makes taking revenge obligatory; the second commands that those who admit their fault be forgiven. The first demands the sacrifice of animals; the second is repulsed by them. The first promises world domination to the Jews; the second forbids the domination of people. The first permits usury for the Jews; the second forbids the taking of money not earned by the sweat of one’s brow. (At that time, war booty was regarded as a reward for bravery and risk.) In the Old Testament, the cloud, darkness and

It is a fiery hose; in the New Testament, it is an unattainable light. The Old Testament forbids touching the sacred covenant, or even approaching it; that is to say, religious precepts are a mystery to the faithful. The New Testament, however, calls out to everyone. In the Old Testament, a curse is pronounced upon those who kill by hanging on a tree; in the New Testament, Christ's crucifixion and death are commemorated on Sunday. In the Old Covenant, the yoke of the commandments is an unbearable burden; in the New Covenant, it is recorded that the time of Christ was an era of grace and ease."¹⁵ This thesis is attributed to the Christian Gnostic Marcion, who lived in the mid-2nd century.

Marcion's view of the cosmos was expounded by his disciple Apelles (d. c. 180). The First Cause—the unbegotten God—created two great angels. The 'famed and good' one created the world; the 'wrathful' other, however, became an enemy of God and the world. Consequently, the world created by the good angel is benevolent, yet it has been subjected to the blows of evil, identified with the Yahweh of the Old Testament.¹⁶

This doctrine, which advocates the view that metaphysical Evil exists and that it plunders culture and nature (the biosphere), is consistent with the Old Testament. For in it too, the violation of the 'Sharia'—that is, the obligatory duties—is regarded as a sin, an act of disobedience. Satan is mentioned only in the Book of Job; yet even there, he is portrayed not as God's rival or enemy, but as his helper. God and Satan together subject the defenceless and innocent Job to severe trials, and then silence him with threats. This is why, in the New Testament, Christ refuses to engage with the Devil, saying, "Get behind me, Satan!" As can be seen, the views of the Old Testament and the New Testament are diametrically opposed to one another.

Well, if that is the case, why did the Holy Bible include the Old Testament within its pages? To answer this question, we need to examine the state of affairs regarding the powers that be at the end of the 2nd century and during the 3rd and 4th centuries.

The primary enemy of the early Christian church was the neo-Judaism of the Talmud and the Kabbalah, but the Christians' polemic against the Jews was based on material drawn from the Bible. Both sides sought to prove that their religion was closer to the original, and therefore more authentic—

¹⁵ Döllinger, *History of Gnostic-Manichaeic Sects in the Early Middle Ages*. Leipzig, 1980, vol. I, pp. 146–147; Arsenyev, I., op. cit., p. 87.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 117.

(Justinus Philosophus touches upon this subject in his work ‘Dialogue with Trypho the Jew’). Essentially, neither side was in the right. For both Christianity and Talmudism were new phenomena linked to the initial stages of their own ethnogenesis. However, recent deviations had compelled them to accept the Holy Scriptures as an irrefutable argument. But if that is the case, then these Holy Scriptures must also be scrutinised.

In the 3rd century, a new contender entered the fray: Manichaeism. Essentially, Manichaean thought was atheistic. That is to say, it substituted the elements of ‘light’ and ‘darkness’ for God and the Devil; the material world emerged as a result of the conflict between these two. However, the Manichaeans’ and the Christians’ perspectives on the world were diametrically opposed. According to the Manichaeans, the material world (the biosphere) was evil; and the one who created it was the evil-hearted Devil. According to Christianity, however, the “creative light” (divine energy) was darkness; whilst “darkness” (the void or vacuum) was light. This was sufficient cause for conflict, both regarding culture and the biosphere itself.

In this situation, Christians who wished to oppose Gnosticism’s atheistic anti-system between the years 180–190 deemed it appropriate to use the ‘Septuagint’ variant of the Old Testament—which had been compiled as early as the 2nd century BC—as a weapon of defence. This “Old Testament” was, in the 2nd century AD, a “covenant” not only for Christians but also for Jews—the vast majority of whom had, in practice, set aside the religious landscape of the past and adopted the Talmud.

By the end of the third century, Diocletian’s relentless persecution on the one hand, and Manichaean propaganda on the other, had presented the Church with a host of complex problems that were more pressing than its previous preoccupation with ancient Judaism. Moreover, they sought to find grounds in Jewish legends to view them as allies against a common enemy, whilst wishing to regard the principle of the one God in monotheistic Gnosticism in the same light as the Christian view. This peculiar tendency, in accordance with their own philosophical currents, went hand in hand with the teachings developed on the issues of the Trinity and the Logos—extending as far as Neoplatonism, the implacable enemy of Gnosticism—within a form of Christianity that was essentially ecclesiastical.

Such an attitude was acceptable at the time. Therefore, we need not judge the 3rd-century apologists and the 4th-century ‘Church Fathers’ for their behaviour in praising the Greek translation of the Bible as both a historical text and a poetic masterpiece. These magnificent

philologists and philosophers could not even have imagined that, a thousand years later, people would emerge who sought to revive the stoning to death of prophets by suggesting that fate absolves the individual of moral responsibility for the sin of love, whilst sacrificing wretched animals in their place and slaughtering people from other tribes to 'read' them. All these events occurring in the civilised world are linked to the Old Testament worldview; yet in the 5th–8th centuries, no sane person would have condoned such atrocities.

These scandals have taken on a new form, which now falls within our sphere of interest.

22. A "Hundred Years' War" More

The war between the French and the English (1339–1449) is known as the "Hundred Years' War". However, at least as long and even bloodier were the series of uprisings in Arabia and Syria during the rise of the Byzantine people's fervour and the final burial of Hellenism. These excesses were a continuation of one another and lasted for 110 years, from 517 to 627.

"Two swords cannot fit in one scabbard," goes an old Persian proverb. Jews and Christians were peers in their zeal. The contradiction we mentioned above manifested itself not only in philosophy but also in the mentality of the common masses. The Jewish population in southern Palestine had been annihilated during the Bar Kokhba revolt; however, the Samaritans, having not joined the Jewish uprising, managed to survive. At that time, the Jews did not consider the Samaritans to be 'one of their own'.

However, in their relations with the Greek populations of Syria and Palestine, the Jews and Samaritans shared the same view. They did not want the Greeks to live in Palestine, the Constantinople administration to collect taxes, or the legionaries to graze their filthy pigs on the holy lands.

As Zenon was not a particularly popular emperor among the people and the empire's position did not appear secure, the Samaritans rebelled on Mount Gerizim in 484, establishing a fortified camp there and making it the centre of their campaign against Byzantium. The rebels captured the cities of Neopolis and Caesarea (in Syria),

showing no mercy to any Christians. Naturally, this situation compelled them to organise themselves into volunteer units, and these units defeated the Samaritans in 486.

Moderation was not abandoned in the punishments meted out after the rebellion was suppressed. The property of wealthy Samaritans was confiscated, and a Christian church was established on Mount Gerizim. But the war did not end there. The front had merely shifted southwards to the Arabian Peninsula, beyond the reach of the Byzantine basileus.

In the 5th–6th centuries, there was no single Arab ethnic group. The northern nomads were referred to as the ‘Sons of Ishmael’ because they were the descendants of Ishmael, the son whom Abraham had banished to the desert at the request of Sarah—the woman who, in her old age, gave birth to Isaac, the legendary ancestor of the Jews. The southern settled populations of Yemen and Hadramaut were known as the Yohtanians or “Sabians”.¹⁷ From the 1st century AD onwards, those living on the southern coasts were referred to as the Himyarites.¹⁸

Yemen was rightly known as ‘Happy Arabia’. This was because, thanks to the country’s rich vegetation, it controlled the Gulf of Bab el-Mandeb, a stopping point for maritime trade ships travelling between Byzantium and India. Consequently, during the 4th to 6th centuries, Jews from Palestine and Syria flocked here; when Zunnuvvas became the Himyarite ruler, they even seized power in 517.

Yusuf Zunnuvvas was the son of a prominent family belonging to the Yazan tribe of the Himyarites and was one of the Jewish rabbis. The latter had secured for him the opportunity to become a member of the Jewish community, whilst the former had ensured his accession to the throne. Zunnuvvas had ascended the throne in 517 by killing Maadi Karib, the legitimate Himyarite ruler, who was likely a Christian of the Monophysite faith.¹⁹ His first act was to plunder Byzantine, North Arabian and Aksumite (Ethiopian) Christian merchants within his country’s borders; he had begun to persecute the Christians, who were quite numerous in Arabia in the 6th century.

17 Müller, *History of Islam*, I/24–28.

18 Ibid., p. 28.

19 Kobishchanov, Yu. M. *North-East Africa in the Early Medieval World*. (North-East Africa in the Early Medieval World), Moscow, 1180, pp. 15–17.

At the request of the Christians of Arabia, the ruler of Aksum dispatched an army, forcing Zunnuvvas to flee. After the victory, the bulk of the Aksumite army returned home, but a small contingent of five or six hundred men was left behind to maintain order in Zafar, the capital of Himyar. Meanwhile, Zunnuvvas, having gathered his army, laid siege to Zafar and offered the Ethiopians the chance to leave the city, promising they would be allowed to depart freely. The gullible Ethiopians, believing these words, emerged from the fortress, but were all killed. Some were hacked to pieces, whilst others were herded into the church and burned along with it. The burning church was turned into a ruin; the terror grew not day by day, but hour by hour.

In the following year, 518, Zunnuvvas captured the city of Nagran and massacred the Christians en masse. Whilst churches throughout the country were being set alight, the Christians were put to the sword. Until that time, there had been no religious persecution in Arabia.²⁰

Christian bishops, such as the Monophysites and the Orthodox, also launched a widespread campaign of incitement against Zunnuvvas. They organised funeral ceremonies everywhere for those who had been killed. Even the Persians began to accuse Zunnuvvas in no uncertain terms, and only the Nestorian priest Sila of Iran sought to 'curry favour with the pagans and the Jews'. However, it is likely that this was a slander fabricated later.²¹ For the Christians and the pagan Arabs were not in opposition to one another; on the contrary, they formed a single super-ethnos, and all of them suffered at the hands of Zunnuvvas.

Zunnuvvas had even turned Iran against him. For the Persians were conducting highly profitable trade with Aksum, and now this route had been blocked. Yet neither side undertook any military action. For Iran was under the rule of the Mazdeans, Byzantium was far away, and the ruler of Aksum was occupied with fighting neighbouring tribes in North Africa. Only in 524 did the Ethiopian army prepare for a landing operation in Arabia to rescue the Arabs.

In fact, this was a Crusade. The Ethiopian army was granted leave for the Feast of the Trinity* (18 May 525). The meeting in the capital of Aksum...

²⁰ Ibid., p. 25.

²¹ Ibid., p. 27.

* A feast celebrated seven weeks after Easter. (trans.)

A collective prayer was held in the cathedral.²² South Arabian refugees were dispatched in separate groups. Having cut off the enemy's retreat, the task of inciting the people to rise up against the dictator fell upon their shoulders. Indeed, they succeeded in this task. Zunnuvvas attempted to thwart the naval landing with the forces remaining loyal to him, but was defeated. The Jewish-Himyarite army had fled, and Zunnuvvas had been killed. And that was the end of it all. The Ethiopians who entered the country slaughtered the Jews and razed the synagogues to the ground without encountering any resistance.²³

Between you and me, the actions of the victorious soldiers who entered the country and their Arab allies were nothing more than ordinary acts of cruelty. The Yemeni Jews survived until the present day. Some were taken to Ethiopia; the Falashas are likely their descendants.^{24*} The Ethiopians treated these people with such tolerance that not a shred of such tolerance was found in their enemies, who had lost South Arabia but were attempting to take their revenge in Palestine.

No sooner had news of the fall of the Jewish-Himyarite kingdom reached the borders of the Byzantine Empire than the Samaritans in Scythopolis attacked the Christians and set part of the city ablaze. Although Justinian held the archon responsible for the incident and had him executed instead of the rebels, this action did not quell the uprising. In 529, Jews, pagans and Manichaeans began burning churches, seeking revenge and killing state officials and clergy.²⁵

However, the situation was not only dire for wealthy Christians. Julian, the rebel leader who proclaimed himself 'king', did not merely burn Christian churches in the cities he had captured, kill Bishop Sammon, and have the priests hacked to pieces along with the sextons who were guarding the churches. In a race held at the Hippodrome, instead of rewarding the jockey who had coincidentally come first, he had him torn to pieces upon learning that he was a Christian.

22 Ibid., p. 45.

23 Ibid., p. 48.

24 Ibid., pp. 49–50.

* The Falashas in Ethiopia were later taken to Israel by Mossad agents via planes and ships, centuries after the fact and following the establishment of the State of Israel. (Trans.)

25 See *Istoriya Vizantiya*. Vol. I, Moscow, 1967, pp. 276–277.

The Byzantines were only able to suppress the uprisings, which led to the deaths of 20,000 rebels, with the help of Arab sheikhs; an equal number of women and children were taken captive by the Arabs. It is not known how many Christians were killed!

The punitive campaigns must also be regarded as moderate. Indeed, the uprisings resumed in 555, but this time they were suppressed without assistance from others. "And a great wave of fear had swept across the entire eastern provinces."²⁶

The uprisings and coups in question should be regarded as major conflicts, much like the nationalist independence movements of the 20th century. For they too began with a spontaneous spark and fervour reminiscent of the Albigensian Wars and the Camisard uprisings in Provence. Furthermore, these uprisings should not be viewed as aimless movements. For the Jewish commanders had placed their trust in the aid of Persia, which was at war with Byzantium, with the intention of reclaiming Syria and Palestine and even restoring the Great Kingdom of Cyrus. However, although the Persians subsequently drove the Aksumites out of Arabia and held Syria and Egypt for a time, for some reason they did not support either Zannuvas or the Samaritan commanders. Yet they had received, if not active then at least passive support from the Jews, both in Syria and in Egypt. Isn't that a bit odd?

It is clear that we must turn our attention to Iran in the 5th–7th centuries. Otherwise, the situation will remain unclear. Furthermore, unless we clarify this complex situation, we cannot shed light on the tragedy that unfolded on the Volga in the 10th century. Let us therefore redirect our journey from Syria and Arabia towards Babylonia and Iran.

23. The Persians of the 5th–7th Centuries: Between the ‘ ’

Even at the height of their military might, the Romans were unable to conquer Mesopotamia. The local population had effectively supported first the Parthians and then the Persians. The Persian kings sought to repay the Jews for their loyalty by allowing them to establish colonies in Ctesiphon and Isfahan. Due to their hostility towards the Orthodox Byzantine ruler, the

²⁶ Ibid., p. 278.

Mesopotamian Nestorians and Armenian Monophysites were also rewarded with similar gestures.

Zoroastrianism, like Judaism, is a monotheistic religion. That is to say, all Persians are obliged to adopt the teachings of the Magi and worship fire, but no outsider is permitted to participate in these rituals. The penalty for a Persian converting to Christianity was death. This situation sometimes led to difficulties not experienced by the Jews, who, like the Persians, did not permit outsiders to participate in their rituals. As assimilation was inevitable during such successive waves of influence, a hybrid population comprising Jews, Syrians, Armenians and Persians—including the Parthian nobility, the Persian kings, and the star-worshipping Arab mercenaries from Bahrain—would emerge in Western Iran and Mesopotamia. Within this miraculous mosaic, there could be no talk of peace. The state council and the Magi sought to limit the Shah's power without coveting the throne. For a centralised authority was necessary to protect against external enemies. The Shah wished to resolve the state council's insubordination at its root, but as they formed the cavalry, he intended to do so without bloodshed. The Jews had sided with the throne and, despite their characteristic excessive zeal and doing everything in their power, had failed to secure any advantage.

In 491, Iran suffered not only a poor harvest and a locust plague, but also a drought. Shah Kavad opened the doors of the state's wheat granaries, but even this failed to quell the people's unrest. Only one minister from the state council, named Mazdak [Mazdek], put forward a view to rescue the state from this difficult situation. This was a dualist religion, but unlike Manichaeism, the 'realm of light' embraced sound will and reason, whilst the 'realm of darkness' embraced irrational elements. Accordingly, the cause of injustice on earth was this lack of reason, and consequently, this injustice could be rectified with the help of the wise—that is, by distributing wealth equally (confiscating the property of the wealthy and distributing it among the Mazdakites) and by executing the "followers of evil", that is, those who refused to side with Mazdak.

When this system was endorsed even by some illogical individuals, the Shah of Iran supported Mazdak. But how were the followers of light to be distinguished from the followers of darkness? Merely on the basis of their personal declarations!

Thus, a wave of lies began.²⁷ Having seized the reins of power, the Mazdakites began to instil terror among the masses. Naturally, the Shah turned out to be nothing more than a puppet in their hands. In 496, Kavad, fearing his own viziers, fled to the Hephthalites; though he returned with an army and regained his throne, the Mazdakites continued to maintain their dominance around the throne and to settle scores with anyone—local or foreign—who stood in their way. However, in 539, Prince Hosroy [Hüsrev] gathered an army of people disillusioned with the Mazdakites, enlisted the Saka tribes into his ranks, and not only had Mazdak executed but also had his followers buried alive. Yet this wave of terror was so powerful that the Mazdakites who managed to escape fled to the Caucasus, as neither the Eftalites in the east nor the Byzantines in the west would accept them.

Could the large Jewish communities of Mesopotamia and Isfahan have remained indifferent to the events unfolding around them? Of course not; they had actively participated in these events, yet each time they had been scattered. In the eyes of the orthodox Talmudists, the Mazdakites were detestable people; in the eyes of the free-willed Kabbalists, however, they were worthy of respect. Violent and bloody clashes erupted among the Jewish communities of Iran, reminiscent of wars between great powers.²⁸ As the Mazdakites' victory posed a mortal threat to the Orthodox Jews, they were forced to migrate to Byzantium. There, too, they were met with a sour face; but this was no worse than death.

When the Mazdakites were defeated in Iran in 529, dark days began for the Jews who had previously sided with them. Mar Zutra, the leader of the Iranian Jewish community who had collaborated with the Mazdakites, was hanged; similarly, Khosrow Anushirvan, who had seized the throne whilst his father Kavad was still alive, had all the Jews he could lay his hands on put to the sword. The surviving Mazdakites fled to the Caucasus to hide amongst the Christian population of Media-Atropatene (present-day Azerbaijan) and succeeded in their aim. For the Christians, who harboured feelings of hatred towards the Zoroastrian people of Iran, had agreed to shelter these fugitives.

27 "Their inner selves—may God curse them—contradicted their outward appearances; their words contradicted their deeds." (Nizam al-Mulk. *Siyasetname*, p. 188, note 339).

28 Soloduxo, Yu. A. *The Movement of Mazdaka and the Uprising of the Jewish Population of Iran in the First Half of the 6th Century CE* // *Bulletin of Ancient History*. 1940. No. 3–4, pp. 131–145.

The Jews, who had joined forces with the Mazdakites, also fled to the Caucasus, but to a place well away from the wrath of the Persians. There, spreading out across the wide valley between the Terek and Sulak rivers, they began to tend cattle, keeping their distance from their neighbours and strictly observing their own traditional customs. However, they did not neglect to observe their own sacred traditions, such as celebrating the Sabbath (Saturday) and undergoing circumcision.²⁹

Let us now turn to the fate of the Orthodox Jews, who played the most significant role in later periods. The Byzantine Orthodox Church harboured hostile sentiments towards the Jews during the great councils of the 5th century. When the Jewish migration from Iran accelerated and stirred the Byzantine Jewish community, rather than a new period of persecution beginning, the state itself granted limited freedom to Jewish worship. In 546, Justinian issued an edict prohibiting Jews from celebrating the Passover and eating unleavened bread if it coincided with the Christian Holy Week*. In 553, however, the Jews were forbidden from 'using their oral traditions...'.³⁰ In short, the Jews were intended to be reduced to the status of second-class citizens (*inferiores*, *quasi*, *infames*, *turpes*)³¹, which led to the emergence of pro-Persian tendencies among the Byzantine Jews. And they would seize the opportunity to take revenge for this humiliation at the beginning of the 7th century.

In 602, the soldiers who had killed Emperor Mauricius had placed the cruel tyrant Phocas on the throne. Shahanshah Khosrow II declared war on Byzantium on the pretext of avenging the murder of his spiritual father. Essentially, this was a war waged with the aim of expelling the Greeks from Asia and Egypt, and thereby reviving the Achaemenid Empire. By siding with the Persians, the Jews not only stirred up unrest in the Byzantine rear but also succeeded in securing the support of the Byzantine commander and directing the Greek army's wrath towards the Eastern Christians (Monophysites and Nestorians).³² Thus, the Persians, having taken Constantinople—

29 For the lifestyle of this branch of the Jews, see Garkavi, *Skazaniya*, p. 17. The anonymous history of Cambridge regards them as the descendants of Simo-nov, who had forgotten the religion of their ancestors. See Kokovtsov, P. K., *op. cit.*, p. 25.

* The week preceding Easter [trans.]

30 Berlin, I. *op. cit.*, p. 76.

31 *Ibid.*, p. 76.

32 Pigulevskaya, N. V. *Byzantium and Iran at the Turn of the 6th and 7th Centuries*. Moscow; Leningrad, 1946, pp. 183–185. Hereafter: Pigulevskaya, *Byzantium and Iran*; Kula-

After the Kula-kil uprisings, they succeeded in winning the support of the local population for their cause and eventually advanced as far as the Mediterranean coast.

The most horrific event, however, took place in Jerusalem in 615, and following the city's unconditional surrender, the Persians took some 62,000 to 67,000 people captive.³³ Realising they could not transport their human cargo across the Syrian desert without suffering heavy losses, the Persian soldiers willingly sold off the slaves and priests. "The Jews, too, out of hostility, bought them at a very low price and killed them," writes an anonymous Syriac author. That is, a person with no personal connection to these events, and therefore impartial. Indeed, even after the treaty of 629, the Jews persuaded the Persian garrison to defend Edessa, which, under the terms of the treaty, was to be returned to the Byzantines. Subsequently, by sending an envoy to Emperor Heraclius to request the pardon of their kinsmen, they managed to save themselves whilst the Persian soldiers met their end by the swords of the Byzantines.³⁵

The Byzantine authorities sometimes failed to recognise the true balance of power, and at other times simply refused to acknowledge it. Heraclius envisaged uniting Monophysitism with Orthodoxy. For this reason, he proposed that the Monophysite doctrine—which asserts that in Jesus Christ there are two bodies, one divine and the other human, and a single will—be unanimously accepted. However, neither the Greeks, nor the Syrians alongside the Egyptians, nor the Iranian Nestorians, nor the Pope accepted this proposal. The adherents of this view could only find refuge in the mountains of Lebanon, and even there only as a small group. This was because the mountain dwellers of Lebanon were the remnants of an ethnic group that did not side with the Greeks or the Syrians.

Faced with this general exclusion, Heraclius began to sympathise with the Jews and provided them with considerable assistance.³⁶ The Western Jews, who had been scattered along the banks of the Rhine during the Roman period, suffered greatly from the Germanic invasions in the 5th century, but lived a peaceful and prosperous life along the banks of the Rhône and Garonne

Kulakovskiy, Yu. *On the Critique of Theophanes' Account of the Years Following the Death of Phokas* // *Byzantine Chronicle*. Vol. 21 (1-2). St Petersburg, 1914, pp. 1-14. Hereafter: Kulakovskiy, *On the Critique*.

33 Pigulevskaya, *Byzantium and Iran*, p. 20.

34 *Ibid.*, p. 263.

35 *Ibid.*, p. 270.

36 Tumeniev, *The Jews*, p. 276

They had. The Merovingians harboured no sympathy for the Jews, and indeed, in 629, King Dagobert had decided to expel them from their lands. However, Heraclius intervened and the expulsion was prevented.³⁷

We do not know what motivated Heraclius. Perhaps he wished to draw attention to the bloody conflicts that had begun in Arabia between Jewish communities and the followers of the new Prophet Muhammad, or perhaps there were other reasons of which we are unaware. In any case, a scheme was afoot against the Christian peoples of the Near East, and in this, both the Greeks and the Persians would lose out, whilst the only party to gain would be the Jews.

The Jews' quite blatantly treacherous behaviour incited the Semites of Syria and Arabia to harbour animosity towards them; consequently, it is difficult to call this anti-Semitism. Ultimately, in 637, an agreement was reached between Bishop Sophronios and Caliph Omar; the bishop surrendered the city to the caliph on the condition that 'the Jews should not be allowed to remain in Jerusalem'.³⁸ Following the surrender of Jerusalem, Caliph Omar ordered the construction of a mosque on the site of Solomon's Temple.

24. The Arabs of the 7th Century: Between the ' '

The Jews had not got on any better with the Muslims than they had with the Christians. The first clashes had taken place in Medina with the Prophet himself. Cornered, the Jews left Arabia, migrated to Palestine, and settled around the Sea of Galilee [Lake Tiberias]. This was because the area was under Persian rule. Later, some of them, fearing retaliation from the Christians of Syria, went to Iran alongside the Persians who were retreating. However, both would eventually come under Arab rule in 650. Since they had embraced Islam, accepting Arab rule was not difficult for the Persians; but for the Jews, converting to another religion was an abhorrent prospect. However, they found another way out to divide the Islamic ummah: Shi'ism.³⁹

37 Ibid., pp. 241–243.

38 Pigulevskaya, *Byzantium and Iran*, p. 285.

39 Shi'a: Followers of Ali.

A Jew named Abdullah ibn Saba, who had supposedly converted to Islam, put forward a thesis in 653 that at first glance appeared reasonable. According to this, Muhammad would return to the world before the Day of Judgement. Those who had been his helpers during his lifetime—namely Ali and his descendants—were obliged to protect him. This view contained the latent seeds of the issue of Ali's right to the caliphate—a matter of contention at the time—and of the later Shi'ism, which was actually more popular among the Persians than the Arabs. Thus, the ideological foundation for the civil war that led to the relatively rapid collapse of the caliphate was laid in this manner.

No, we shall not dwell here on the history of events marked by numerous uprisings, revolts, murders, betrayals, treachery and naivety. The victims of these wars were Ali (stabbed to death in 661) and his son Husayn (killed during the battle of 680), who were abandoned by their friends and supporters. However, the 'repentant' rebels rose up again and were put to the sword in 690; thereafter, a series of executions followed one after another.

And so the Jews left wretched Iran at that very moment. Having lived in that country for 1,200 years, they had benefited from the protection of the law and the emotional support of those in power. However, when Iranian laws were replaced by Sharia and the shahs by emirs, the Jews once again set out in search of 'a homeland where they could live'. Let us hear this story of migration in their own words: "It was the summer of the year 4450 (690); at that time, the conflict between the Ismailis and the Persians had intensified, and the Persians had been defeated by them (the Arabs) and had been forced to kneel before them. The large Jewish population, however, had escaped from the land of Paras as if fleeing the sword, and, seeking refuge from one tribe to another, from one state to another, they had reached the lands of Russia, Ashkenaz and Sweden, where they found many other Jews..."⁴¹

This text reveals a great deal. The Russian state already existed in the 7th century; paganism and Jewish colonies existed in Germany (Ashkenaz) and Sweden, but although in 737 the Arab conquerors supposedly forced 'the fire-worshipping Persians, the bull-worshipping Khazars and a number of people practising the law of Moses' to accept Islam, the list does not include Khazaria's

⁴⁰ Müller, *History of Islam*, I/332.

⁴¹ Berlin, I. op. cit., pp. 78–79. This text was written by the famous chronicler and physician Joseph b. Joshua Ha-koren, who, although he lived in the 16th century, possessed manuscripts dating from much earlier.

is not mentioned.⁴² Essentially, the desire to convert the local population to Islam was nothing more than an unfulfilled wish of Marwan II. The Khazars, under the command of Turkic-origin princes from the Achina tribe who ruled as khans in Khazaria, ravaged the Transcaucasus in 690 and held Derbent until 693. So, how could the Jews fail to notice such a powerful state? – Unless they simply did not see it!

It follows, then, that the route taken by Jewish migrants after leaving Iran did not pass through the North Caucasian steppes—which in those years were inhabited by the Bulgars and Alans—but instead followed the route leading via Asia Minor and the Black Sea to the mouth of the Dnieper and on to Russia, from there, they reached the lands where the western branch of the Jews who had remained in Europe following the collapse of the Roman Empire had established colonies.

If this is the case, then who are those in Khazaria who ‘follow the law of Moses’? Most likely, they were the Jews who fled to the Caucasus alongside the Mazdakites. They had a keen understanding of the conflicts arising among the Jewish communities in Iran and, fearing their own kinsmen, had refused to take them along whilst fleeing. Just as the tragedy of the Mazdakites was forgotten by the descendants of those who took part in it, so too did the descendants of these Jews act differently in the 8th century.

25. The 8th-Century Greeks: Between the

Thus, the Umayyads of Syria had become the enemies of both the Mazdakite and orthodox Jewish factions. The former were allies of the Khazars; the latter had found refuge amongst the Christians. Such a division of forces explains why, during the siege of Constantinople in 717–718, when Constantinople was under siege, as Leo the Isaurian used ‘Greek fire’ to burn the Arab fleet and drove the enemy back from the walls with his land army, which was suffering from starvation, whilst the Jews also fought alongside the Christians.

The Arab forces had been rendered helpless on all fronts. In 718, the Christians in Spain who had not yet been subjugated

42 I. Berlin speculates that this event forced the Jews to abandon Khazaria and move westwards. (See *ibid.*, p. 79).

had established the Kingdom of Austria. In Central Asia, the Türgiș, in alliance with China and having secured an agreement with Tibet—an ally of the Caliphate—had supported the rebellion of the Sogdians, who had been conquered but refused to accept defeat. The Khazars had forced the Arab armies to retreat and had extended their military operations as far as beyond the Caucasus.

In 723, Emperor Leo III issued an edict ordering the forced baptism of all Jews living within the borders of the Byzantine Empire.⁴³ This edict was issued following a victory over the Arabs and one year before the start of the struggle against the iconoclasts. Why was this deemed necessary?

The answer to this question is not found in the sources. It follows, then, that the wisdom behind the edict must be discerned by reviewing the general situation. The Christians of Asia Minor, as well as the Monophysites and Nestorians, were enemies of both the iconodules and the Arabs. Was Leo the Isaurian seeking to increase the number of his supporters by granting the right to participate in subsequent reforms and by counting the Jews as Christians? Given that the subsequent religious persecution was directed not against the Jews who upheld their own religious beliefs, but against the Orthodox, this may well be the most plausible interpretation. On the other hand, Yohanna Dimeșkî (Mansur), one of the caliph's viziers, had written a letter condemning the iconoclasts under the protection of the Umayyad Hisham.

It is assumed that this edict called upon the Jews to migrate from Byzantium to Khazaria, but it is not known whether this was actually implemented. Even if it were, this migration took place to Khazaria, a country that was an ally of Byzantium at the time. Given that Bulan initiated the struggle against the Arabs, it is hardly surprising that he created the necessary conditions to direct this people—who formed the military force of Leo the Isaurian—to where they ought to be. Indeed, the Byzantine administration brought the Mar-daytîs, a mountain tribe from Lebanon, from Syria and stationed them in the garrisons of Asia Minor in order to utilise their military capabilities against the Muslims.

However, just as the Jews did not give much thought to the matter when it came to fighting against Islam, they were equally unconcerned about their own situation and that of their kinsmen. In the 18th century, from the territories of Spain

⁴³ this decree is mentioned in the chronicles of the Byzantines Theophanes (Bonnae tedkiki, I, 617) and Kedren (Bonnae ted-kiki, I, 793). See Berlin, I. Age., p. 76.

Just as the Jews expelled from Spain found refuge in Protestant Holland, so too in the 8th century did they benefit from the hospitality of the Khazars and found 'a Netherlands of their own in the vicinity of the Khazars'. Moreover, the Itil River was the meeting point of two caravan routes: one stretching from Iran to Biarmiya (Great Perm),⁴⁴ and the other from China to Provence.⁴⁵

Having seized such a stronghold, it would have been understandable if they had forgotten their friendship with the Byzantines. As for the Jews' quarrels with the Greeks, there were plenty of pretexts. After all, the Greeks had treated the Jews' finest as mere commodities. It was for this very reason that the Jews had begun to favour the Arabs.

The document showing that relations between the Byzantines and the Diaspora Jews had broken down is too clear to allow for any misinterpretation; yet, despite its particular importance in general world history, the date of this event is an estimate:⁴⁶ "The ruler of Constantinople, during the reign of Harun al-Rashid (786–809), expelled all the Jews living there. They, too, were intelligent, but they came to the land of the Khazars, where they encountered idol-worshipping people. The Jews offered their religion to these people. They accepted it, finding it superior to their previous religion."⁴⁷ This document indicates, firstly, that the iconoclastic emperors were unable to implement their decisions regarding the baptism of the Jews because there was no one left to persecute; secondly, that this persecution coincided with the Seventh Ecumenical Council (787 AD), and subsequently confirms our hypothesis that the Greeks established dominance over the Anatolians, who had embraced the last Jews. Events

44 See Hennigues, R. *Unknown Lands*, Vol. II, Moscow, 1961, p. 76.

45 Needham, J. *Science and Civilisation in China*, Vol. III. Cambridge, 1959, pp. 681–682.

46 This document, recorded by the 8th-century author Ibn al-Athir, is preserved in al-Dimashqi. (*Cosmographie de Dimaschqui*. Copenhagen, 1874, p. 380); an attempt to compare the document with al-Masudi's account was made by D.A. Xvolson. (*Collection of Essays on Jewish History and Literature*. Vol. I, Part I. St Petersburg, 1866, p. 152). For the critical edition, see Berlin, op. cit., pp. 77–78.

47 The literature on the Khazars' adoption of Judaism is quite extensive. For recent studies on this subject, see Artamonov, **The Khazars**, pp. 262–283; Koestler, **The Thirteenth Century**, pp. 58–82. The views we shall outline in the following pages differ from the preceding ones; however, in our personal opinion, they are insufficient to fully elucidate the matter.

According to this logic, in the final years of the 8th century, following the transfer of the Caliphate from the Umayyads to the Abbasids—who were besieged by Persian advisers seeking to revive Sasanian Iran—the Greeks were contemplating ridding themselves of the Jews, whom they had come to regard with antipathy due to the latter's alignment with the Arabs.

However, the Caliphs of Baghdad could only view the Jews as second-class subjects, and that was precisely how they wished to see them. Selling the Christian captives in their possession as slaves was the ideal solution for them. Although it was not a matter of perspective, purchasing these captives was also in the Jews' interest. As Arab and Persian fanaticism was greater than that of the Jews, establishing dominance over the caliph's subjects was a goal beyond their reach. For this reason, they too began to search for a new country... and found it in Khazaria.

CHAPTER TWO:
THE ZIGZAG OF
HISTORY

Exiled Princes



The Birth of the Khimera (809–838)



**The Development of the Chimera (839–
398)**



The Rise of the Chimera (899–944)



The Agony of the Chimera (945–966)

V. EXILE PRINCES

26. 's Stay with the Khazars

Following Mazdak's death and the flight to the Caucasus, the Persian Jews—who had never shared a common destiny with the Mazdakites—lived for 200 years alongside the Khazars in the valley-strewn region of Dagestan, between the Terek and Sulak rivers. These two peoples lived in friendship and peace, without interfering in each other's customs and traditions. When the Arabs attacked the Caucasus, the Jews and the Khazars jointly repelled this attack and shared the same fate. In the face of defeat, their men fell together; their women and children were sold into slavery together. When victory was achieved, they prepared for a new war together.

In this war, where the balance of power was unequal, credit must be given to the two small peoples who maintained their resilience and honour. In an era when ethnic groups—that is, neighbours—lived side by side without assimilating one another, and thus without intermingling, the key element playing a significant role in ethnic interaction was symbiosis. Here, although for different reasons, both ethnic groups were in a state of homeostasis. The Khazars, having survived by completing their own ethnogenesis phase, reached this stage through natural means; the Jews, however, reached it through artificial selection, as the majority of their people had been killed by the Persians and the resistance of their ethnic system had weakened. Yet even this was more than sufficient for them to resist the invaders.

During the period when the power of the Caliphate was temporarily weakened by a succession of uprisings, and the Khazars, under the command of the Turkic khans, launched military operations against the Arabs first in Azerbaijan and then in Armenia (721–722), the surviving Zoroastrian Persians and Jews adhering to the Law of Moses also aided them. Turkish

A Jewish commander named Bulan (mus) achieved extraordinary successes in these wars and, as a result, declared his independence and revived Jewish rituals for his people.¹

There was no such thing as the ‘conversion of the Khazars to Judaism’; moreover, in the Middle Ages, the universal religions—Islam and Christianity—were fundamentally at odds with the ancient religions, which, even when a tribe grew large enough to become an ethnic group, did not admit anyone other than its own members to their rites; consequently, such a thing was not even possible. One had to be born Persian or Indian to become a Zoroastrian or a member of the high caste; it was not possible to join these groups later in life. If it became necessary to admit a foreigner into one’s own community or to incorporate a foreign tribe, false genealogies were fabricated to justify the breach of this rule. For example, when Yezdigerd decided to expand his cavalry, he offered the Armenian nobles Zoroastrianism on the pretext that their lineage actually traced back to the Parthians, that is, the Arsacids; however, as they refused to renounce Christianity, this effort came to nothing.

Judaism is the culture of a people ‘who came forth from Yahweh’. Consequently, those who newly embraced this faith were rarely regarded as ‘the lepers of Israel’. The Jews maintained friendly relations with the Khazars; they went to war together, but practised their worship separately. In doing so, quite rightly, they sought to maintain good relations with their neighbours—

1 A contradiction is evident in the dates established by M. I. Artamonoff. Whilst describing the Khazars’ incursion into Transcaucasia under the command of Bulan, the route is mentioned as ‘probably the Daryal’ and Ard-vil, that is, the city of Ardebil. (*Xazar*, p. 269). Artamonoff presents this raid, which took place whilst the Khazars were being slaughtered by the Arabs following several victories, as if it were the Khazar invasion of Azerbaijan in 731, a situation which contradicts the explanation regarding Bulan’s victory. It is further stated that the Arabs later seized “copper-coloured banners” from the Khazars (*ibid.*, p. 215), which could not possibly have belonged to the Jews. And finally, the khan’s son Barcil was certainly the commander of the Khazars, not the Jews. His mother’s name was also Khanşah Parsbit (“with the face of a leopard” – see *Old Turkish Dictionary*, L., 1969). I believe we must accept a much earlier date, such as 718. For this date does not contradict the known and established events. Moreover, the route followed by Bulan has not been correctly identified. Dar Alam is not Daryal, but means “Gate of the World” in Arabic/Persian. Derbent, on the other hand, means “locked gate” (Persian). This fortress was recaptured from the Arabs by the Khazars in 718.

They proceeded from the view that there was no need to mould them in their own image or, conversely, to secure their support through hypocrisy. Given that it was an inevitable occurrence in the Charvacı tribes, where the young people had never had the opportunity to read anywhere or at any time, and despite having forgotten a large part of the complex Talmudic texts, the Jews—descendants of the Mazdakites—did not melt away in an environment surrounded by the tribes of Dagestan. Admittedly, these tribes had no intention of accepting them into their midst, but then again, the Jews were not keen on this either. Bulan's success, however, lay in another matter: he had kept the pagans out of his lands; he had convinced other Jewish princes and noble princes to revive the forgotten religion; he had erected a tent, built a ship, and placed lamps, an altar table and sacred vessels,² in short, he had revived Jewish rites for his own people. The 10th-century Jewish writer Judah b. Barzilai assessed this event as follows: "The Khazars became proselytes and acquired proselyte rulers."³ However, S. Szyszman (pronounced 'Şışman') notes that the word 'ger' in the Bible originally meant a foreigner who had assimilated into another people and acquired membership rights within the tribe that accepted him.⁴ This word acquired the meaning of 'proselyte' only later. When we consider the general course of events, we see that the original meaning is more plausible than the modern one. For Bulan had adopted Karaism, not Rabbinism.⁵

Readers should not be surprised that the Jews living in Khazaria were called Khazars. This is simply a common practice regarding ethnonyms that are generalised when a sub-ethnic group adopts the name of another ethnic group whilst in exile. Just as a Breton in Russia might identify as French, or a Karelian in France might identify as Russian. To outsiders, the Khazars were the people living in Khazaria who submitted to the authority of the Khazar Khaganate. But when it came to the inhabitants of the country themselves and its historical destiny, the distinctions at the sub-ethnic level became apparent. These distinctions did not always carry significant meaning, but they played an important role during certain events. In the second half of the 8th century, when the Rabbinic Jews began to arrive here from Byzantium, the situation in Khazaria was similar.

2 Artamonov, *Khazars*, p. 269.

3 *Jeschurun*. Vol. XI. No. 1911. Berlin, 1924, p. 113.

4 Szyszman, S. *Where did the conversion of the Khazar king Bulan take place? Homage to André Dupon-Sommer*. Paris, 1971, p. 327.

5 Szyszman, S. *King Bulan and the Problem of the Conversion of the Khazars// Ephémérides Théologiques Loraines*. Vol. 33. Bruges, 1957, pp. 68–76.

Given that it severed ties with Mazdakite traditions, Bulan's reform also carried this significance. The intellectual bonds between the free-thinking members of the Jewish community and the equally free-thinking Persian group had simply evaporated. When life presents other problems, the chimera collapses. The Jews had cast aside the complex worldviews of vital importance to the Persian Mazdakites like a withered shell. Subsequently, the Mazdakites—or rather, the Hurremites—would attempt to merge with the iconoclastic Christians.⁶ For during the bloody clashes with the Arab and Iranian Muslims between 815 and 837, the Khazar Jews would not come to the aid of their former comrades-in-arms, with whom they had once shared the same views.

Consequently, intra-ethnic bonds are not undermined by differences of opinion. On the contrary, the migration of Byzantine Jews to Khazaria was facilitated by the fact that they encountered people there who shared their faith and helped them to settle. And since the Jews lived in cities during the 7th and 8th centuries, they too settled in the cities of Itil, Semender, Sam-kerts and Belencer, and engaged in trade—a field in which the Khazars were not particularly skilled.

The Khazar Jews had shown a warm welcome to those arriving from Byzantium, but the latter had responded to this hospitality with contemptuous hatred. There could be no question of the two communities merging into a single group. Just as the Germans had treated their Russian colleagues in Byron, so too did the Rabbinites treat the Karaites. Neither community was unaware that they were related. No, they had not broken the unity; but on a super-ethnic scale. Since they did not see themselves as a single ethnic group, they behaved as they pleased.

Moreover, the historical role played by the Jewish immigrants was far greater than that of the indigenous Jews. The fact is that it was they who transformed Khazaria from a small khanate into one of the most prominent states of the Early Middle Ages. Whether this brought happiness to the Khazars is another matter. However, an ethnic chimera had emerged and begun to fulfil its function by the beginning of the 9th century. And the events described below had preceded its emergence.

6 Babek, leader of the Hurremites, had concluded an alliance with the Byzantine Emperor Theophilos in 830. (See Müller, *History of Islam*, II/199). However, the Mazdakites' attempt to unite with the Orthodox iconoclasts ended in failure, despite their best efforts.

27. There is nothing of the sort in the chronicles ()

A series of events that led to the unfolding of these developments had begun, accompanied by unexpected wars. The Khazars had wrested the Crimean Peninsula from the Byzantines. The steppe region of Crimea, comprising the eastern section of the southern coast stretching from Kerch to Sulak (Suroj), belonged to the Khazars. At times, the Crimean Goths in the steppes, along with their capital Theodoro (Mangup), and at other times the entire country, refused to submit to Byzantium's demand for allegiance.

The Byzantines' main stronghold in Crimea was Korsun (Khersones, near Sevastopol). Like its inhabitants, who regarded themselves as independent of the government in Constantinople yet never severed their ties with the empire, it was a city renowned for its wealth and defiance. Orthodoxy had spread as far as Khazaria without encountering any resistance.⁷ Everything seemed to be going smoothly, and it was thought that no pretext would arise to strain relations. But suddenly... "Bravlin, the warrior and powerful Rus' prince of Novgorod... having ravaged the region stretching from Korsun to Kerch with his vast army, arrived at Suroj with great force... he broke down the iron gate, entered the city with a sword in hand, and stormed into Saint Sophia's... and plundered everything in the shrine..."⁸ The text goes on to mention a miracle and the prince's⁹ conversion to Christianity. Furthermore, other historically significant matters are recounted, which will be discussed in due course.

Almost nothing in the text provided is clear. Who were the Russians mentioned here? And what is this strange name 'Branlin'? For interpreting it as 'branliv' (warrior) causes tension and bewilderment. Where did this Bravlin come from, and from which "Novgorod"? Because the Novgorod we know did not yet exist at the beginning of the 9th century.¹⁰ What, then,

7 There is a considerable amount of literature on medieval Crimea. For the relevant bibliography, see Artamonov, *Xazar*.

8 The resting place of St. Stephonos, Bishop of Suroj. Based on Gumilevskiy, F. *History of the Russian Church*. M., 1888, p. 21; cf. Vasilyevskiy, V.G. *Works*. 4 vols. Pb.; Pr., L., 1908–1930. Vol. III, pp. 95–96. Hereafter: Vasilyevsky, *Works*; Vernadsky, *The Origins*, pp. 180–182.

9 The name of this prince, Bravlin, is sometimes read as 'branliv', meaning 'warrior'. (Vernadsky, *The Origins*, p. 182).

10 Artamonov, *Xazar*, p. 336.

When was it organised: in ⁷⁵⁵11 or ⁷⁹⁰12? What were the reasons behind such an intervention in the Khazar affair? Who was the instigator of this sudden attack, the consequences of which were highly significant? One thing is clear: this campaign was directed against the Khazars, but at the same time, the Christians of Crimea had suffered from the collapse of the Christian bishopric extending as far as Khorezm [Harezm]¹³ in the Great Steppe. Indeed, this collapse continued into the 10th and 11th centuries. However, one of these observations justifies the interest in Bravlin's campaign.

We have no right to reproach the author of this work for leaving a host of exciting questions unresolved. For what we have before us is not a chronicle, but a biography. Events concern chroniclers as much as historians, but miracles are dealt with only by hagiographers. Consequently, the hagiographer, adhering to the usual rule, pays no heed to worldly matters; the chronicler, as we shall see, does not write down everything he is obliged to know and cannot remain silent about. For this reason, we are grateful to this hagiographer for simply mentioning the events that help shed light on the beginning of the great change in Khazaria.¹⁴ As for the interpretation of the events and the critique of the sources, we shall not repeat the study once undertaken by G.V. Vernadsky regarding the quoted text.

G.V. Vernadsky notes that there are two versions of the Life of Saint Stephen of Surozh: one in Greek and brief; the other, in Russian and lengthy, was brought to the 16th century by V.G. Vasilyeff, though it was already known in Russia as early as the beginning of the 15th century. After examining this version, Vernadsky states that the 'Novgorod' mentioned therein refers to Neapol (Simferopol), founded by the Scythians, and that the Russians came to Crimea from the Don and Donets regions. Before arriving in Suroj, the Russians plundered the entire Crimean coastline from Chersonesos to Kerch and

11 Gumilevskiy, F. *History of the Russian Church*, p. 23.

12 Vernadsky, *The Origins*, pp. 180–183. As the relevant literature has been reviewed, this date is preferable.

13 Emperor Constantine says the following about the steppes around the Black Sea: "Here, amongst the ruins of cities, there are traces of Christianity and crosses carved into perforated stones." (Gumilevskiy, *History of the Russian Church*, p. 22).

14 Klūčevskiy, V. O. *Old Russian Lives of the Saints as a Historical Source*. Moscow, 1871. Hereafter: Klūčevskiy, *Drevné-russkiye*.

They cause particular damage to churches. However, their commander agrees to be baptised in Suroj and returns the spoils of war he had taken.

The reasons for the campaign are not explained. Perhaps this attack was a plot by Byzantine diplomats who were in conflict with the Khazars over the region of Gothia (the Gothic region), which the Khazars had captured in 787. In fact, the cities in Crimea belonging to the Khazars had been laid to waste, but Korsun (Kherones), which belonged to the Greeks, had also been plundered. Nevertheless, the Greeks still profited from this affair. For in 790, Gothia would once again fall into Byzantine hands.¹⁵

With regard to the ancestral homeland of the Russians, M.I. Artamonoff has reached a similar conclusion¹⁶; moreover, as this conclusion differs from Vernadsky's, it is of considerable importance. Consequently, these were the descendants of the Rossomans, who were at war with the Goths, the former allies of the Huns.¹⁷ Furthermore, they are mentioned on various occasions by Arab and Greek writers as a people living in the vicinity of the Slavs, yet distinct from them in terms of language and customs. The Rus' and the Slavs did not merge until the 10th century, during the reign of Vladimir the Holy. Until then, the Rus' were an independent people well known in Germany. German chroniclers referred to them as *the Rug*, and to Olga as *Regine rugorum*. The process of integration began in the 9th century;¹⁸ however, this was a long and arduous process.¹⁹

15 Vernadsky, *The Origins*, pp. 182–183.

16 Artamonov, *The Khazars*, p. 366.

17 Jordanes, pp. 91, 279.

18 Novoseltsyev, A. P. *Eastern Sources on the Eastern Slavs and Rus' in the 6th–9th Centuries // The Old Russian State and Its International Significance*. Moscow, 1965, pp. 355–419. Hereafter: Novoseltsyev, *Eastern Sources*.

19 A. G. Kuzmin also reached the conclusion regarding the identification of the Rug and Rus ethnonyms at the same time as we did. Kuzmin has compiled numerous scattered pieces of information that align with the definitive concept noting that the Rug, who were already identified as one of the peoples affiliated with the Roman Empire's federation as early as 307, were spread across a vast area. The Rugians' main homeland was the southern parts of the Baltic region. After being driven out of there by the Goths, they scattered across Eastern Europe, from the Adriatic to the Dnieper and Lake Ilmen. It is precisely this widespread distribution that led to them being known by such diverse names: Rug (Rog), Rus [Rusi], Roz, Rutsi, Ruyan, Ruten. Furthermore, after several centuries had passed, their ethnic origins may have been forgotten by the descendants of the ancient Rugians.

It is always difficult to predict the consequences of political manoeuvres. It may not be entirely fair to judge the Byzantine diplomats for intending to weaken the Khazars by inciting the Rus to attack them, and thereby annexing the Gothic region of Crimea to the empire through their internecine strife. However, the logic of events took hold here; the Russians set foot on the Black Sea, and their raids ravaged the shores of Asia Minor for 200 years. A very high price to pay for a political intrigue!

Indeed, the same intrigue produced a result contrary to what was intended. Christian churches also suffered from the Russian plunder; the influence of the Orthodox in Khazaria was weakened, and the resulting political vacuum was immediately filled by Judaism. Thus, whilst the Greeks thought they were gaining an ally for free, they had instead acquired two powerful and ruthless enemies in addition to the Arabs and Bulgars. However, I do not believe it is fair to blame the diplomats for this. Between 786 and 790, there were fierce conflicts in Byzantium between Empress Irene and her son, Constantine VI. Irene had her son's eyes gouged out in 797, yet the chronicler-monks praised her as a devout empress and held her in the highest esteem. As can be seen, a political error is glossed over in the chronicles; but unfortunately, the record of the same error finds its place in the biography of Saint Stephen, and this enables us to identify how the balance of political power suddenly shifted and only in the 11th century. Had the course of events in Crimea not been re-examined, this history would not have entered the 'Chronicle of Nestor', and the entire history of Eurasia would have remained obscure. Yet, during this period, extremely significant events had also taken place there.

28. The Rahdânîs

By the mid-8th century, events unfolding across the Eurasian continent had transformed the world in ways no one could have foreseen. The Frankish state, undergoing a spiritual upheaval, under Charles Martel

A. G. Kuzmin does not regard the Rugians as either Germanic or Slavic, as had previously been assumed, but rather as the 'Northern Illyrians', enemies of the Goths. See Kuzmin, A. G. *Padeniye Peruna. Stanovlèniye xristi-anstva na Rusi*. Moscow, 1988, pp. 133–139. Hereafter: Kuzmin, *Padeniye*.

was placed in an iron cage, whilst his son Pépin the Short had deposed the “indolent kings” of the Merovingian dynasty in 751.

In the same year, the Arabs clashed with the Chinese in the Talas Valley and routed them. Two other Chinese armies—one in Manchuria, the other in Yunnan—were slaughtered by local tribal militias, and China’s long-cherished dream of establishing dominance over Asia, pursued since the beginning of the Tang dynasty, had come to nothing.

Six years prior to this event, in 745, the Second Turkic Khaganate had collapsed, and the Turkic warriors had either perished in battle or been slaughtered here and there during their days as nomads. Their place had been taken by the Uighur Khaganate, which was certainly not aggressive but, conversely, open to the cultural influences of Persia rather than China.

However, the greatest turning point was the rise of the Abbasids to power in Baghdad and the beginning of the caliphate’s decline. For this event had reopened the East-West route, well-known to merchants. In Persian, ‘rah’ means ‘road’, and ‘dân’ is the root of the verb ‘to know’, so ‘rahdâni’ means ‘one who knows the road’ or ‘guide’. It was this name that was given to the Jewish merchants who had monopolised the caravan trade between China and Europe.

Trade was exceptionally profitable. This was because the goods traded were not everyday consumer items, but luxury goods. To put it in modern terms, this was a form of currency exchange and the trade in narcotics. However, this high income came at a high cost. Hefty sums were paid for transport, the wages of guards; for the caravanserais established at water sources and lakes along the route, the signposts erected to guide the way, and the caravanserais built for travellers to spend the night or, particularly on hot days, to rest.

The journey from the Red Sea to China took approximately 200 days.²⁰ If the route passed along the northern coast of the Caspian Sea, the distance was even greater. However, as the rebellions during the Abbasid Caliphate were internal matters and the Khazars ensured security along the steppe route with great diligence, the aforementioned northern route was used. For this reason, Itil, situated at the crossroads of these long routes, had gained considerable importance. Resting on the Volga was not only beneficial but also pleasant.

20 In the old days, a day’s journey indicated a distance covered in six hours on horseback (trans.).

As for the fact that Jewish guides in the 8th century were referred to in Persian as 'rahdânis', this indicates that the trading company in question was founded by a Babylonian—that is, Iranian—community that had fled from Caliph Abd al-Malik in 690. Later, Jews from Byzantium also joined them. However, during the period of constant warfare between Sogdiana and the Caliphate, China and the Türgiș Khaganate, this trade came to a standstill. Once these wars ended, and China lay in ruins following the An Lushan Rebellion (756–763), causing the price of silk to fall, the Rahdanians returned and became masters not only of the eastern route where silk was exchanged for gold, but also of the northern route between Iran and Kama, where furs were sold for silver coins. Naturally, Khazaria soon became the crossroads of these routes.

In ancient times, the caravan route stretching from China to Europe veered southwards, passing through Hotan, the Pamir and the Vahan in Iran, before turning westwards. This route was both arduous and inhospitable. Consequently, following the defeat of the Hyung-nu (Huns), the route was diverted north of the Taklamakan Desert, namely to Karashar, Kucha, Kashgar and the Fergana Valley.

Another, more convenient route passed through Turfan in Yedisu. This route had been used during the era of the Great Turkic Khaganate in the 6th–7th centuries. However, when the Turks conquered the North Caucasus, it became possible to transport silk directly to Europe without paying exorbitant customs duties to the Shah of Iran. However, to use this route, it was necessary to build defensive forts, dig wells and erect road markers, but this was a difficult task. Consequently, the northern route could not be used until the Khorezmians also joined the trade. Following the Arabs' conquest of Central Asia, the opportunity arose to open this route; the constant rebellions in eastern Iran led to the revival of the route from Gurgenc to the Volga, that is, from Üstyurt to Khazaria.

The Khazars had long been living in their own way in the lower reaches of the Volga, in the delta and the floodplains. They were engaged not only in livestock farming but also in pomegranate cultivation and fishing. The dazzling blue rivers flowing through green meadows and dense thickets also nourished the capital, Itil, situated on the peninsula formed by the Volga and its eastern branch at Aktübe.²¹ The Khazars, with their rich economic resources—

21 Gumilëv, L. N. *'The Khazar Burial and the Site Where the Itil River Once Flowed'* // *Proceedings of the State Hermitage Museum*. Vol. XX. L., 1962, pp. 56–58.

As they possessed these resources, they had established dominance over the peoples in the neighbouring valleys, extending as far as the Buzaçı Peninsula in the arid steppe.²²

On the other hand, the Khazars did not believe that anyone from outside could threaten them, and even Mervan, who was accustomed to victory, had realised that their country was no easy prey. In the 8th century, the Volga's rich variety of fish was not among the goods exported abroad. This was because the natural economy had fostered certain habits. Those accustomed to dates or olives had no need for 'herring and sprat'. Consequently, the Khazars fed themselves on their own delicious fish without owing a debt of gratitude to the Arabs or the Greeks. It is hardly surprising that writers describing Mervan's campaigns note that his greatest booty was 20,000 members of the 'Sakâlîbe' clan—that is, people who could be enslaved.

There has been much debate regarding the meaning of the word "Sakâlîbe". Initially, although the word "slaviya"—(), they were regarded as Slavs.²⁴ When it became clear that these captives had been taken in the lands of the Burtas,²⁵ the view emerged that the "Sakâlîbe" were a Turkic-Finnic mixed race.²⁶ However, medieval geographers ascribed a different meaning to "Sakâlîbe". Al-Kûfi applied this name to all the "infidel" peoples of Eastern Europe. Al-Horezmî, meanwhile, wrote in 836–847 that "Germany is also a Sakâlîbe country." Mesudî also included the "Namçin" (Germans) and the "Turks" (Hungarians) among the Sakâlîbe. It is conceivable that the Slavs were also among the enslaved peoples taken away, but considering that Mesudî referred to them as "valinane" (Volhynian people), it becomes clear that the terms "Slav" and "Sakâlîbe" do not denote the same thing. It is also said that due respect must be paid to the views unanimously put forward by so many medieval geographers!

22 Gumilëv, L. N. *The Origins of the Rhythm of Nomadic Culture // Peoples of Asia and Africa*. 1966. Vol. 4, pp. 85–94.

23 Garkavi, *Skazaniya*, pp. 41–43, 162; Kovalevskiy, *K kritike*, p. 159.

24 Shahmatov, *The Most Ancient*, pp. 34–37; Tretyakov, P. N. *The Eastern Slavic Tribes*. Moscow, 1953, p. 252. Hereafter: Tretyakov, *The Eastern Slavic Tribes*.

25 Artamonov, *The Khazars*, p. 220.

26 Zeki Velidi Togan, *A. Ibn Fadlan's Travel Account // Studies in Oriental Studies*. Vol. XXIV. Leipzig, 1939, pp. 365–369.

27 Novoseltsev, *Eastern Sources*, pp. 368–370.

The term ‘Sakâlibe’ was well known not only in Eastern Europe but also in Spain, where the same name was given to the elite guard composed of slaves at the court of the Umayyad caliphs. This elite guard included not only Slavs but also Germans, French, Turks, Magyars, Pechenegs... in short, all the slaves purchased from European markets. I believe that, just as with the terms “Negroes” (black slaves brought from East Africa) and “Mamluks” (Turkmen, Kipchak, Circassian and even Russian slaves in Egypt), an ethnonymic meaning should be recognised in this word as well.

A.P. Novoséltseff proposes another version: just as the “Turkish” elite army in Baghdad was not composed solely of Turks, and just as the “Circassian” elite units in Egypt included Kipchaks and Georgians, one must theoretically accept the existence of “Slavic” elite units as well.²⁸ Yet the evidence suggests the opposite. The Abbasids, being Sunni, refused to enlist the Maghrebian Ismailis and the Daylamite Shiites; consequently, the Berbers occupied Egypt and Syria, whilst the Daylamites occupied Baghdad and Western Iran. In Egypt, the maritime Kipchaks and the fortress-dwelling Caucasians remained separate from one another, and their sultans, although all were referred to as Mamluks, succeeded one another in succession.

It is also incorrect to refer to the Don River as the ‘Slavic River’ in the 10th century. For at that time, in the upper reaches of the Don, there lived the “Chikls”, who were certainly not Slavic but later merged with the Hopör Cossacks.²⁹ Between those living on the banks of the Don and the Slavs living on the Dnieper, the Savirs were still alive, who had separated themselves from the Russians in the 17th century. For this reason, the fact that the Transcaucasian Christians—the Sanars—aligned themselves with the “sahib es-sahalibe” in 853,³⁰ may simply have amounted to aligning themselves with the commander of any powerful tribal federation.

Is there still any point in regarding the word “Slav” as a synonym for “slave”? No, in any case, Artamonoff was right.³¹

In the 8th–9th centuries, fish was Khazaria’s main export. For this reason, merchants from Persia and Byzantium—that is, Jews—had flocked here.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 369.

²⁹ Shennikov, A. A. *The Red River*. L., 1987. Hereafter: Shennikov, *The Red River*.

³⁰ Novoseltsev, *Eastern Sources*, p. 371.

³¹ Artamonov, *Khazar*, p. 230.

It might be thought that the “Jews themselves” were not specialists in “live cargo”. This is true, and indeed Gardizi records that the Hungarians carried out this trade until the early 9th century, when it moved westwards, that is, to Pannonia. “The Hungarians were fire-worshippers; they would go to the Guz, the Slavs and the Rus, gather prisoners of war from there, bring them to the Byzantines and sell them.”³² After the Hungarian-Khazar war, this sordid trade fell to the Rus. However, according to Ibn Rusta’s account, by the 10th century they were selling captives to the Khazars and Bulgars.³³ and furthermore, the victims of the slave trade were now truly the Slavs.³⁴ Even more distressing is the fact that these slaves captured in Eastern Europe were taken away not by outsiders, but by the local population. It should be noted that the majority of the population living here consisted of old, or rather (pre-Slavicised) elderly ethnic groups who, like their Khazar counterparts, had exhausted their former vigour, yet unlike the latter, had failed to secure the import of young and vigorous men capable of being carried by the Slavs or Turks. However, these brave Turks, who had saved the Khazars from the Arab conquest, had made a mistake of vital importance.

The Turkic khans of the Açına dynasty believed that, with the religious tolerance and tranquillity characteristic of the steppe peoples, they could maintain a workforce and an intellectual class capable of fulfilling the diplomatic and economic duties of their state. Wealthy Jews presented luxurious gifts to the Khazar khans and beys; Jewish beauties also filled the khan’s harem. Thus, a Jewish-Khazar hybrid culture emerged.

The only thing that might have troubled the Rahdani Jews was the fact that Bulan’s attempt to bring the political life of Khazaria under his hegemony had failed due to the characteristic Arab audacity, leaving military power in the hands of the Turkic-Khazar princes. Getting along with them, however, was not always easy.

The formation of the hybrid entity took place in the second half of the 8th century. During this period, the Khazars launched military operations against the Arabs beyond the Caucasus and vented their anger over the destruction of Semender and Belencer by razing Azerbaijan to the ground. These wars were...

32 Novoseltyev, *Vostochnye istochniki*, p. 389.

33 Ibid., p. 397.

34 V. T. Pashuto interprets this period somewhat differently (*Vneshnaya politika Drevney Rusi*. M., 1968, p. 91) Hereafter: Paşuto, *Vneşnaya*; cf. Novoseltsyeff’s aforementioned work (p. 415), which records that the Slavic city of Kiev was conquered by the Rus’ under Askold.

There is no information as to whether the old Jews, such as Lan's comrades-in-arms, or the new Jews, such as the Rahdânîs, took part.

29. Lack of Organisation

The Khazar Jews compensated for the damage caused by their military failures with love. By the end of the 8th century, a multitude of mixed-race children were born from Jewish-Khazar marriages between the Terek and the Volga. However, their fate differed from that of their parents. I shall explain the reason.

All Eurasian tribes regarded the child as a member of the father's lineage. A child born legitimately received a share of the tribal property; they gained the right to protection, mutual aid, and participation in tribal rituals. Since the tribe was an element of ethnicity and culture, tribal membership also determined ethnic affiliation. The mother's lineage, however, was not taken into account.

As for the Jews, ethnic affiliation corresponded to membership of a community. Membership of a community, and thus the right to be a Jew, was determined by being of Jewish descent. In the 2nd century BCE, this rule facilitated the inclusion of Edomite tribes and Galileans into the Jewish community (see § 20), yet the same rule led to the isolation of Jewish communities in Europe and Eurasia during the Middle Ages, particularly where marriages between Christian and Muslim men and Jewish women were prohibited. In Khazaria, no such distinction existed.

A son born to a Khazar father and a Jewish mother was granted the right to utilise all his father's rights and his mother's resources. He was taught the principles of Judaism; members of the community assisted him in building a career or engaging in trade; and his father's side protected him against enemies and rescued him from calamities in times of disaster. The situation of the son of a Jewish father and a Khazar mother, however, was entirely different. He could not inherit his father's share of the tribal estate, nor could he study the Talmud in Jewish rabbinical schools; he could receive support from no one other than his own parents, a situation already constrained by tribal traditions and Mosaic law. These wretched souls had no place in life. Therefore, they too sought refuge in the far reaches of Khazaria – in Crimea – where they could study the Talmud

They adopted Karaism, which discouraged the reading of the Scriptures, instead emphasising the virtue of reading the Pentateuch, whilst instilling obedience to the requirements of the Father's laws. Their descendants formed the small Karaim ethnic group of Crimea. Their anthropological characteristics resemble the Turkic and Near Eastern types.³⁵ They felt sympathy not for their descendants who had 'made their fortune' in the wealth of the Volga region, but for the indigenous peoples: the Khazars, Bulgars, Goths and Alans.

There was a difference between the Rahdânîs and the Khazar Karaites not only in daily life but also in matters of theology. The teachings of the Torah, although not widespread among adherents of other religions, were not prohibited either. They formed part of Christian and Muslim theology; consequently, Jews could participate freely in religious debates and express their views without breaking the law.

However, the Talmudic dualism put forward by the Jews in the second century, driven by the passioner impulse, was not like this. The Talmud could only be studied by rabbis and theologians; ordinary Jews, meanwhile, read the summary of the Schulchan Aruch, a collection of works defending the legitimisation of daily life, citizenship and criminal liability.³⁶

The distinction between the Jews—descendants of the Madzaki—and the Talmudists, who were their guests, is clear. The former had settled in the barren steppe, lived off the bounty of the landscape, and coexisted in symbiosis with their neighbours, the Khazars. In other words, they had become an Eurasian ethnic group, and thus a residual people. They lived in this way until the 20th century, and no one took an interest in the Karaites' confessional characteristics. For this was their internal affair.

However, the Karaites had broken away from the Eurasian super-ethnos. They had been ostracised by their own kinsmen and by those with whom they had previously shared the same faith. Yet neither Bulan nor his successors could have foreseen that this would happen. For a time, they had sincerely believed they were helping their kinsmen; moreover, those who came from Byzantium

35 Alekseyev, V. P. *In Search of Ancestors*. Moscow, 1972, pp. 184–285. Hereafter: Alekseyev, *In Search of*. Compare with L. N. Gumilev's interpretative essay: 'On Anthropology for Non-Anthropologists' // *Nature*. 1973. Vol. 1, p. 112.

36 Schulchan Aruch, or Four Jewish Law Books, translated by Heinrich Georg F. Lowe. Hamburg, 1837–1841.

They had fostered such a belief and concealed the truth. Once the truth had come to light, there was nothing left to be done, and events began to unfold in accordance with the natural law of the 'intermingling of ethnic processes with socio-cultural phenomena' that arises following a banal error. The price of this error was, as always, heavy.

The similarity between Mazdak's Jewish contemporaries in the 6th century and the Karaites of the 8th century cannot be regarded as an intellectual affinity. It is more accurate to perceive a psychological affinity here, but even this is sufficient. The heads of the Sura and Pumbeditha academies, who managed to survive the massacre of the Jewish community in 690, were able to meet on common ground with the Arab caliphs; but their rivals had joined the Shiites. During the 748 revolt led by Abu Muslim, the Jewish tailor from Isfahan, Abu Isa, took the lead of ten thousand Jews who rebelled against Talmudic dogma. Declaring himself the herald of the Messiah, he acknowledged that Jesus Christ and Muhammad were 'true prophets'. The uprising was suppressed in 755, but another man, Anan ben David, would reignite this flame in 767, and the uprising would continue until the end of the 8th century.

Those were days of uprisings by masses of people stirred into action by religious slogans. In 755, the Persians rebelled under the leadership of Sumbad Mag; in 767, the people of Khorasan raised the banner of revolt; in 778–779, the red banner of the Kharijites flew in Gorgan; and between 776 and 783, the rebellion of the 'white-robed ones' in Transoxiana had shaken Arab rule. Added to this grim picture was Karaism, which had emerged as a protest against religious change over the course of two centuries and had grown in strength.

In essence, Talmudism and Kabbalah bore so little resemblance to both the religion of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—who worshipped Elohim—and to the teachings of Moses, who advocated worship of the fiery spirit of Yahweh, that anyone examining these traditions would inevitably have to recognise the stark difference between them. In the Zohar (The Book of Splendour), the place of the specific God of the Old Testament is taken by Ensof (the Infinite), who has no attributes and is connected to the world through the ten sefirot (the creative powers of God).³⁷ This view is further removed from the doctrines of the Old Testament than from those of Christianity and Islam. Having understood this, the Karaites rejected Talmudism and looked favourably upon Christianity and Islam, which caused them much trouble.

³⁷ Gerts, G. *History of the Jews*. Vol. 8, Odessa, 1907, p. 62.

In the 20th century, other doctrines, regarding Karaism—as set forth by Anan ben David in the 8th century—as ‘simple’, set aside other classical views and turned to it.³⁸ Since the views of the ancient Essenes [Isshim] and the ideas of the authors of the Qumran Scrolls are sufficiently in line with Karaism, they were presumably also theologically correct. However, something else concerns us: why did these old, or rather outdated, views come back to life in the 8th century? In other words, what were the natural causes of this resurgence?

The Essenes had suffered heavy losses by participating in two Jewish wars—one between 67 and 70 and the other between 132 and 135—and by being deprived of the passionate warriors they lost on the battlefields and the fertile women who were enslaved. Only those who managed to seek refuge in Parthia survived; they laid the foundations of the Gnostic movement within Judaism there. Those who fled to Arabia, however, settled in the valley of Yathrib [Medina]. The Prophet Muhammad defeated the latter group and forced them to migrate from Arabia. However, it should be noted that here, the Jews too found themselves within the sphere of that passionate impulse which first energised the Islamic ummah and subsequently the Arab-Muslim populace. This impulse was bound to affect the Arab Jews as well, and indeed it did; yet the blow they received compelled them to leave the country, thereby forcing them to withdraw from the process of ethnogenesis.

However, as Arab pressure weakened, the turn came to the Jewish passionaries; or rather, they had merely repeated what had once been said and forgotten. For a slogan was only as valuable to the passionaries as it served to create a pretext for action and to indicate the goal of ‘what ought to be’.

In the current situation, ‘being’ Muslim or Christian held no meaning, neither in terms of a theological doctrine proposing a synthesis of worldly religions, nor in terms of the actual balance of power. For Anan, a second Muhammad would not emerge from David. It was not worth arguing with the pagan Khazars. For Bulan had not attempted to make Khazaria a second Galilee, nor had he succeeded. The true enemies of the new doctrine were the Talmudic Judaism that had already taken shape. How bloody internal conflicts had arisen among the Jewish communities of the Near East, P.

K. Kokovtsoff’s published excerpts, one can see

38 Naphtali Wieder. *The Judean Scrolls and Karaism*. London, 1962; *Revue de l’histoire des religions*. Vol. 168, No. 451, pp. 62–74.

aspects. If one thing is clear, it is that the Karaites defeated the Jews in both the Islamic and Christian worlds; the latter, however, survived only as a remnant of the Khazar-Jewish hybrid in the region of Crimea under Byzantine rule. As for what actually happened to Khazaria itself, this is such a complex matter that it will be addressed in later sections.

To begin with, let us note that Bulan, who had taken the name Sabrizeli, could not lay claim to the revered title of ‘prince in exile’—a title preserved by the Jewish diaspora as a memento of their fallen kingdoms. The Jewish traditional state possessed a form of monarchy that could not have existed whilst it was in a state of dispersion. For this reason, until the Jews reached the Promised Land, the leader at their head would bear the title of “prince”. However, poor Bulan and his tribe had been excommunicated by the Israelites, the descendants of the Mazdakite Jews. Although they themselves had forgotten this 300 years later, Jewish doctrines remembered everything perfectly well. For this reason, the title of ‘exiled prince’ had been bestowed upon another individual who bore this title and passed it on to his subsequent descendants.

30. The Sound of the Sky

During the intervening decade, Patriarch Nikephoros ascended the throne in Constantinople (802); Caliph Harun al-Rashid had his finest viziers and most loyal friends, the Barmakids, executed (803); in the Khazar Khaganate, a powerful figure named Obadiah seized control of the government, turning the khagan—who belonged to the Achina dynasty on his father’s side—into a puppet, and established Rabbinic Judaism as the official religion of Khazaria.

This situation, which witnessed not only a religious revolution but also a coup d’état, had led to the emergence of numerous legends reflecting a wholly imaginary aim, such as concealing the truth from the people and from history.³⁹ Indeed, it is not even known who this Obadiah was. As far as can be seen, he was not a descendant of Mazdak’s comrades-in-arms, nor was he one of the local Jews—such as Bulan—who were uncultured yet heroic Karaim warriors. We read the following lines about him: “He was a just and righteous man. He brought fresh blood to the throne—

³⁹ For a critical study of the versions concerning the ‘conversion’ of the Khazars, see Artamonov, *Xazar*, pp. 268–273.

He had strengthened their assemblies (synagogues) and houses of learning (schools), and by bestowing much gold and silver had gathered together the majority of the Israelite rabbis (judges); and they, in turn, explained to him the 24 books of the Mishnah (sacred texts), the Talmud, and all the prayers accepted by the Hazzans. He feared God; he observed the laws and prohibitions.”⁴⁰ One thing is clear from these lines, and that is that Obadiah was neither a Karaite nor a Khazar.⁴¹

No, these accounts demonstrate that Obadiah was a cultured man and had connections with the Jewish diaspora. He had spent the Khazars’ gold and silver without batting an eyelid, merely to persuade the ‘rabbis of Israel’ to come to the Volga. If we apply the general rule that a political coup requires money and organisation to this event, we can see which circles Obadiah was connected to. Neither the Khazars nor the Khazar Jews were the beneficiaries of this change of power. On the contrary, the Jews and the Jewish community as a whole had profited. If this is the case, it means that the Jews had carried out this coup in accordance with the principle of legitimacy. The legitimate khan from the Achaia clan had become a Jew, that is, he had converted to his mother’s religion and been accepted into the community. All state offices were distributed amongst the Jews; moreover, Obadiah himself had taken the title of ‘bek’ (pex), the Arabic equivalent of which is ‘melik’*—meaning ‘ruler’. Thus, from that day onwards, Obadya had taken the helm of the state, in contrast to the figurehead khan, who was kept under surveillance and permitted to appear before the public only once a year. As for what this coup meant for the Khazar people, Melik Yosif [Yusuf], the head of the Itil Jewish community, explained it as follows: “From that day onwards, our ancestors were under the supervision of the Shekhina’s⁴² (God’s presence) ko-

40 Kokovtsov, P. K. *Jewish-Khazar Correspondence in the 10th Century*, L., 1932, pp. 80, 97.

41 M. I. Artamonoff’s suggestion that Abodya was one of the Khazar princes who propagated the Jewish faith is entirely at odds with the documents presented by the author himself. (*Khazar*, pp. 280 ff.)

* In the remainder of his work, the author uses the terms ‘hakan’ or ‘han’ when referring to a Turkic khan, and ‘melik’ or ‘bek’ when referring to a Jewish ruler. The reader should take note of this distinction. (trans.)

42 The philosophical explanation of this term dates back as far as Pilo of Alexandria. In the Talmud, the Shekhinah is identified with God. She wears dark garments, wanders the earth, and sheds tears for the sorrow of her children scattered among the nations and the Temple of Jerusalem. Joseph considered the mythological meaning of ‘Shekhinah’ rather than its philosophical one.

Since we came under his rule, he has subdued all our enemies and overthrown all the peoples and tribes living around us. So much so that, in these days (around the 960s, –L.N.), there is no one left to stand against us. All of them—the King of Edom (the infidels) and the King of Ishmael (the Muslims)—serve us and pay tribute.”⁴³ Yes, things were going well.

Now, let us pause briefly from the account of the historical course in order to grasp the significance of this coup. Obadiah’s coup was certainly no ordinary event; on the contrary, it was an exceptional occurrence. Neither the Turkic-Khazars nor the Jews fit the general pattern of ethnogenesis. The Turkic-Khazars were in the final stage of the inertia phase of the Hunno-Sienpi steppe super-ethnos, which had incorporated the Ugrians, Hionites, Tingling, and Cumans, and had developed a specific behavioural stereotype and worldview—that is, a culture. The Jews, however, were younger. They had already undergone the phase of fracture and fragmentation of the ethnic structure. As former contemporaries of the Byzantines and the Slavic-Russians, the Jews differed from them not by nature, but by virtue of possessing an anthropogenic landscape—cities and caravan routes stretching from Chang’an to Toulouse. The inevitable rule of ethno-landscape dependency had been partially disrupted, and this was more than sufficient for the ethnic system to solidify—or, more accurately, to become semi-solidified. In other words, the ethnos had transformed into a social stratum, without which Obadiah’s revolution and the subsequent rise of Judeo-Khazaria would have held no meaning.

However, rigid systems automatically remain outside the realm of natural self-development. Their activity develops through constant interaction with their environment, and indeed this activity is even greater than that found in natural ethnic groups; yet such systems cannot ‘age’. Consequently, their entry into the realm of natural (natural) ethnogenesis disrupts or, more accurately, alters the customary course of regional ethnogenesis, thereby creating “zigzags” that neither nature nor science can foresee. Nevertheless, this ensures that the matter is accorded special importance.

It should not be assumed that the formation of a chimera is an exceptional event in which the Jews play the sole role. On the contrary, analogous results are obtained wherever inorganic contacts surface on a supra-ethnic scale. For example, whilst the descendants of the Diadochi and Epigoni lived in the mountains of Bactria and Syria in the 3rd century BC, the Parthians—the heroic heirs of Turan—were the ruling class of a fragmented Iran.

43 Kokovtsov, *Yevreysko*, pp. 80, 97.

The Macedonian dynasties—the Ptolemies and the Seleucids—and the Parthian rulers—the Arsacids—remained strangers to their own subjects for three centuries. The hatred felt towards the Macedonians later extended to the Romans as well. Consequently, until the passionate upheavals of the 1st and 2nd centuries, the peoples of Syria and Egypt were, in a sense, ethnic chimeras. One could cite other rather striking examples, but there is no need. We must return to the Lower Volga.

VI. THE BIRTH OF THE CHIMERA (809– 838)

31. Power

The Jewish community in Itil had not only amassed great wealth, but had also taken Turkish khans belonging to the Achaemenid dynasty into their fold. The Turks, who maintained the tradition of polygamy, married beautiful Jewish girls; their children, whilst remaining Turkish princes, became members of the Jewish community. They read the Torah and the Talmud; they mingled with their mothers' relatives and, following their advice, married into wealthy families. Thus, the ties between the Khazar nobility and the people living quietly in the fertile valleys of the Volga delta—who did not interfere in the affairs of a state that took no interest in them—were severed. However, the old tribal aristocracy remained firmly in place, and the problems associated with it were highly complex. A solution to these problems would only be found in the 9th century.

It could be said that, in the eyes of the persistent Khazar ethnic group, the Turkish beys and tarhans were just as foreign as the Jewish merchants. In fact, the Khazars had derived a single benefit from the Açına dynasty: protection and personal safety against external enemies. However, once these became routine, they were quickly forgotten. For this reason, the social zeitgeist—where the people loved not the aristocracy or even themselves, but the past—had found a place among the Khazar people. As the Jews stood outside this antagonism, they lived by joining the colonies and had very little contact with the local population.

However, Turkic-Khazar and Jewish-Khazar relations were diametrically opposed. The Turks had gifted the Khazars with children who grew up to be passionate Khazars. The Jews, on the other hand, whilst not weakening the Khazar ethnic system, simplified it, thereby

They acquired valuable Jewish children (with a Jewish mother) and bastards (with a Jewish father) from among the local population. A direct observation would reveal that this constitutes a chain of ordinary coincidences; yet, it also represents a directed process that, over the course of 80 years (from Bulan onwards), has yielded unprecedented results. Among these results, one can point to the emergence of a population that spoke Khazar, acquired relatives among the Khazars and Turks, adapted to their surroundings, but could not be considered Khazar in terms of ethnicity and culture. Foreign authors speculating on Khazaria under the influence of external factors believe that these people were Khazars who adopted the Jewish faith, that they were not Jewish, and that true Khazars never actually existed.¹ Although no conclusive evidence is required regarding the Khazars' connections, medieval Jews assume that their Khazar coreligionists were the descendants of Simonov—one generation—and Manasiyev—half a generation—who lived in the “Principality of Kozraim, severed from Jerusalem”: “They are very numerous. They collect taxes from 25 states. The Ismailis pay them tribute to ensure their own security and to benefit from their valour.”²

This quotation brings the situation in the 8th century into sharp relief. In the 9th and 10th centuries, the situation is even more pronounced. In the first decade of the 9th century, such events occurred that, as a result, two super-ethnic groups transformed this ethnic contact zone into a savage and ruthless chimera.

32. Domination

No one made any effort to convert the people of Khazaria to the Jewish faith. Jewish philosophers were preserving the Covenant of Yahweh for the elite class, who were now basking in the spoils of power and had seized control of the state apparatus.

1 A. Koestler cites the 11th-century Karaite author Yafet ibn Ali, who described the Khazars as ‘bastards’ (mamcher) who had adopted Judaism, whilst also demonstrating the manner in which this religion spread to Khazaria. (Koestler, *Thirteenth*, p. 80). There is no need to seek certain political characteristics in the natural course of intermarriage. Bastards are not born according to the directives of the administration.

2 Berlin, I. *Istoricheskie sudby*, p. 84.

3 Artamonov, *The Khazars*, p. 280.

The coup d'état, which targeted the tribal aristocracy of all the ethnic groups living alongside the Turkic dynasty within the Khazar Khaganate, led to civil war; whilst the Magyars sided with the rebels, the Pechenegs, who served as mercenaries, supported the Jews. We find information regarding these clashes between the people and the ruling power in the writings of Constantine Porphyrogenitus: "When a breakaway from the ruling power began and a civil war broke out, *the legitimate authority* seized the upper hand. While some of them (the rebels) were put to the sword, others fled to (present-day) Pecheneg territory (the lower reaches of the Dnieper – L.G.) and settled there alongside the Turks (here meaning the Hungarians – L.G.), concluding a treaty of friendship and taking the name Kabars."⁴

In accordance with the statement in the Babylonian Talmud: 'A Jew who does evil to a Jew is not a Jew. He does evil to God Himself and thus, by defiling His Glory, serves death' (from the unpaginated and unnumbered section of Sanhedrin), this was a merciless war.

For the Early Middle Ages, a total war was not an unusual or novel phenomenon. It was customary to impose taxes on the vanquished after breaking the enemy's resistance, whilst offering those who submitted voluntarily the opportunity to serve in auxiliary units of the army. However, the slaughter of all people on this side of the front line also found its echoes in the depths of the past. For example, when Joshua conquered Canaan, he forbade the taking of women and children as captives; on the contrary, he ordered that they all be put to the sword. It is even said that the enemy's domestic animals were killed. Obadiah had revived the ashes of the past.

Following this war, the exact start and end dates of which cannot be determined, the face of Khazaria also changed. It transformed from a country characterised by systematic unity into one where the amorphous mass of the populace and a ruling class alien to the people in terms of blood and religion became enemies. We have no basis for describing the resulting situation as feudalism. So, can we call it an ethno-social chimera that we might fit into any mould? Obadiah, who emerged as a representative of the Khazar administration, never stated that the fate of the people and the state concerned him.

4 Artamonov, *Xazar*, p. 324. Here, a comparative semantic analysis of three parallel translations has been carried out.

It is likely that the principle of legitimacy served the Jews well. Since their rule was regarded as *the true authority*, it was deemed legitimate, just as in the case of Mazdak. Be that as it may, in the first two decades of the 9th century, the new order in Khazaria had achieved a complete victory without suffering significant territorial losses, by submitting to the pagan khans.

The Crimean Goths—an Orthodox region—had seceded from Khazaria and united with Byzantium. The Khazar Muslims, however, were unable to obtain aid from the Caliph of Baghdad because his army was occupied with the rebellion of Babek, that is, the Hurremites, the successors of the Mazdakites, and thus suffered immense losses. The Khazar Jews abandoned their former allies to their fate in this hour of disaster, but in doing so, they established diplomatic contact with the Caliph of Baghdad and secured privileged trading rights along the shores of the Caspian Sea.

In this merciless war, the final word should have been spoken by the unique Khazar people of the Terek and Don valleys and the Volga Delta; yet they contented themselves with silence. The ethnic inertia of the Persis-tent people led not only to the downfall of their own beys, tarhans and iltebers, but also to the ruin of their Magyar allies who had fled to Lebedya beyond the Dnieper.⁵ The fugitives attained a degree of personal safety there by entering into neighbourly relations with other pagan and powerful khanates. This is why, in 834, the Jews established the fortress of Sarkel to protect themselves from both the steppe Magyars and the western enemies belonging to the Rus' Kievan Khaganate.⁶ The garrison at the fortress consisted of Pechenegs and, likely, Guzs.⁷

The Khazars' passivity had spared them from ruthless massacres, but it would not be able to protect their children and grandchildren from a grim fate. VI-

In the 2nd century, the Khazars' khans had taken matters into their own hands to resolve internal and external political issues affecting the interests of their subjects. The Jewish princes, however, were not pursuing such a goal. They were more concerned with dealing with Judaism's internal enemies than with Khazaria itself. In order to disrupt the church organisation of the Khazar Christians, they had prohibited the reconstruction of these churches; in 854, the Khazar Muslims were forced to migrate beyond the Caucasus.⁸

⁵ Artamonov, *Xazar*, p. 341.

⁶ Gumilev, L. N. 'The Tale of the Khazar Tribute' // *Russian Literature* 1974. No. 3, p. 166.

⁷ Artamonov, *The Khazars*, p. 328.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 329.

The increase in the number of tax-paying subjects suited the new administration's purposes. Consequently, by the second half of the 9th century, the western border of Khazaria had reached the Dnieper. The Slavic tribes—the Severians, Vyatichs and Radimichs—had become tributaries of the Khazars. The Tverians and Ulichians, who lived along the lower reaches of the Bug and Dniester rivers as far as the mouth of the Danube, were apparently allies of the Khazar khans in the ongoing war between the Magyars and the Khazars. This can also be understood by consulting the chronicles. Oleg subjugated the Severians and Radimichs in 884–885; 'he continued to wage war against the Ulichs and Tverians.' If so, it follows that the Khazars, who were enemies of the Kievan princes, were the natural allies of the Ulichs. However, according to the direct account of the 9th-century chronicle, the Polans were not paying tribute to the Khazar khagan.⁹ At that time, at the head of Kyiv were the Rus chieftains Kir and Askold, grandsons of Kiy, and rulers who never fled from Yurik.¹⁰ In this situation, as in many other cases, a historical analysis is more worthy of consideration than the information provided by authentic sources.

33. : A Chimera on the Volga Coast

Although we may describe 8th-century Khazaria as an ethnic chimera, the same country transformed into a socio-political chimera in the 9th and 10th centuries. Christians who did not participate in internal conflicts had escaped the purges and continued to benefit from the protection of their co-religionists across the sea. However, the pagan locals had no one to pin their hopes on. True, they had taken part in campaigns under foreign banners, but the new administration had no need of their assistance.

The Khazar Jews had hired mercenaries. Initially, they had used the Pechenegs against the Magyars; however, when their relations with the Pechenegs soured in the second half of the 9th century, they then made an agreement with the Guz. In 889, the Guzes drove the Pechenegs out; the latter, not forgetting the Khazars, turned towards the Dnieper steppes, where they continued to fight the Magyars. By 915, the Pechenegs had appeared on the borders of Russia. But this matter will be discussed later. The Guzes, too, for a long

9 Gumilëv, *Skazaniye*, p. 168.

10 Braychevsky, *Ryci*, p. 172.

For some time, they were unable to maintain friendly relations with the Khazar Jews. Consequently, the Jews were forced to seek a new military force. Such a force was to be found on the south-eastern coast of Khazaria. The Muslims living at the customs posts willingly agreed to enter the service of Khazaria, on condition that they would not fight against other Muslims. In the 10th century, the permanent troop strength of the Itil mercenary elite army stood at seven thousand.¹¹ This figure was sufficient both to keep the outlying regions of the khanate under obedience and control and to sustain small-scale external wars. The Jewish Khazars had not launched any conquests beyond the Caucasus in the 9th century; yet the administrative system described here had proved far more costly than that of the Turks. And the Khazars were forced to bear the full cost of all this, having been reduced to the private property of an illegitimate regime that was alien to them in terms of religion, blood and custom.

One might object that the budget of the Khazar Khaganate is unknown. That is true; but the budget of the Caliphate of Baghdad is well known. In 869, 2 million dinars—equivalent to two years' tribute—were spent on the wages and other expenses of 70,000 Turkish and Berber mercenaries. Such was the cost of soldiers in the 9th century. The Khazars, however, were smaller and poorer than the Caliphate.

The Khazar administration had made the payment of higher wages to its soldiers conditional on a specific requirement: defeat in battle was strictly forbidden. The penalty for a soldier failing to fulfil his duty—that is, deserting the front line—was death. Only Jewish commanders and their aides, who were not mercenaries, were exempt from this rule. However, in return, their property, wives and children were confiscated; the khan would then hand these over to his relatives in front of them. Those who had nothing to mitigate their situation were executed.¹⁴

Warriors, and particularly regular armies, cannot always be held responsible for failures in military operations—

11 Mesudi, op. cit., Minorsky, V. F. *History of Shirvan and Derbent in the 10th–11th Centuries*. Moscow, 1963, p. 194. Hereafter: Minorsky, *History of Shirvan*.

12 Müller, *History of Islam*, II/213.

13 Ibid., p. 216.

14 Kovalevskiy, A. P. *The Book of Ahmad ibn Fadlan on his Journey to the Volga in 921–922*. Text, translation and commentary. Kharkiv, 1956, p. 147. Hereafter: Kovalevskiy, *The Book*.

Their intentions are plain to see. Consequently, to deprive them of certain privileges is essentially an attempt to conceal the failings of one's own mismanagement. Otherwise, approaching the matter with a different logic results in utter nonsense. For the money paid to the soldier is not being sacrificed; on the contrary, the soldier sacrifices his life for his master in return for the money paid to him. In short, with the wages paid, the master utilises what he has purchased to a certain extent; yet the lion's share always remains his own. In other words, Muslim mercenaries were viewed not as human beings, but as profitable commercial commodities. According to the Eurasian nomad, the Slavs, Byzantines, Arabs and even the Germans were not subjected to such treatment as that shown to warhorses or hunting dogs. Nevertheless, as there were those willing to serve voluntarily, the number of sipahis in the Khazar army sometimes reached as high as 12,000. It is known that the Khazar administration obtained the money paid to the warriors from the Rahdânîs, who travelled from China to Spain and from Iran to Great Perm. Indeed, there were times when merchants altered their routes due to increased customs duties. In such instances, these expenses were covered by tribute collected from the 'Edomites and Ishmaelites'; in other words, the Khazars were paying the price for their own subjugation. For this very reason, engaging in transit trade was of vital importance to the Jewish community in Khazaria, whilst Muslim merchants and people in neighbouring regions, working towards the same end, were subjected to extraordinarily unfair treatment resulting from the unilateral practices in the Itil region. In his study on this subject, V.V. Grigoryeff states: "The Khazar people were an anomaly of the Middle Ages. Surrounded by savage and nomadic tribes, this people possessed every possible advantage: a sound administration, extensive and profitable trade, and a standing army. Whilst the countries of Western Europe were strangling one another amidst disorder, fanaticism and deep ignorance, the Khazar state had gained a reputation for justice and tolerance, and those persecuted for their religious beliefs from all corners of the world flocked there. It was as though a bright meteor had flashed across Europe's dark horizon, only to fade away without leaving any trace of its existence."¹⁵

Essentially, the city of Itil had captivated travellers with its scale. Situated on both banks of the Aktübe, the city extended some 8–10 km inland from the left bank, with the lush green

15 Grigoryev, V. V. *On the Duality of Supreme Power among the Khazars// Russia and Asia*. St Petersburg, 1876, p. 66.

peninsula. The city's Jewish population numbered around 4,000, but there were also Khazars there who were likely of mixed heritage and adhered to Judaism. The remaining Khazars were Christians, Muslims, or adherents of their ancestors' faith.¹⁶

Synagogues, mosques, churches, vast markets, sheep as cheap as dirt, fish of every kind, eye-catching watermelons, children herded into the slave market to be sold, ships gliding along the Volga, caravans travelling from east to west... All this left onlookers speechless; describing it, however, moved 19th-century historians.

Yet Istahrî and Ibn al-Hawqal would say, 'The Khazars produce nothing but fish glue, and sell nothing ^{else}¹⁷'; however, the revenue from these dazzlingly cheap fish was considered very little for such a city. Khazar sailors earned very little in return for their gruelling labour.

The Khazar Khaganate was compelled to be tolerant, as it derived its income from transit trade. However, should anyone attempt to infringe upon the interests of the Jewish community, the Khazar king (not the khagan) would respond with a severe reaction. In 922–923, Muslims had demolished a synagogue in the city of Dar'ul Babunac.¹⁸ In retaliation, the Khazar ruler immediately had the minaret of a mosque in Itil demolished and, declaring: "Were I not afraid that not a single synagogue would remain standing in the Islamic lands, I would certainly have had the mosque demolished too," he ordered the execution of the innocent muezzins.¹⁹

However, Muslim merchants purchased young Pecheneg and Slavic slaves from him, paid customs duties, and paid for fruit at the market; they acted as intermediaries in the supply of wild and well-trained cavalry and archers. Maintaining peace with them was more profitable than waging a war, even if victory were assured.

34. Scepticism

Whilst the order maintained by the Khazars captivated their contemporaries, there were also scenes that marred this otherwise glorious picture. The Khazars, Ni-

¹⁶ Zaxoder, *The Caspian Compendium*, pp. 140–143.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

¹⁸ The location of this city has not been identified. *Ibid.*, p. 161.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

In the summer months they would go out to their vineyards and orchards; in the autumn they would bring their produce to the Itil to pay the taxes due to the khan and, consequently, to his relatives. They would even catch fine fish from the Volga that were 'more delicious than lamb and chicken'. The Khazars were obliged to kneel before the commanders; worse still, whilst the Jews and Christians would not allow a hair on the head of their fellow believers to be harmed, the children of the poor Khazar cotton workers were being sold in the slave markets of Islamic countries.²⁰ It appears that the indigenous people of Khazaria, deprived of the kind of organisation provided by confessional communities, were entirely defenceless against the threats of tax collectors with whom they shared neither religion nor blood ties.

The wages of the Khwarezmian and Gurgench warriors, who ensured obedience to those who provided for them, were also paid out of these very people's pockets. And these soldiers lived as guests in the Itil region, together with their wives and children.²¹

In addition to the Muslim elite units guarding the khan, the Jewish prince also had his own retinue of 4,000 men.²² They too had wives and children; but they did not fish, nor did they work in the fields under the scorching summer heat.

B.N. Zahoder notes that 'the productive class of Khazaria lived under far harsher conditions than the peasants in the Muslim East'. In contrast, whilst peasants in Islamic countries sometimes paid for their rebellion against tax collectors with their lives, not a single uprising ever occurred in Khazaria! Surely the reason for this was not that the Khazars were particularly happy!

It would be wrong to blame the Khazars for the fact that their situation was not merely dire, but also hopeless. Every uprising they launched against the administration, which possessed a regular army, had been ruthlessly suppressed. It was easy to hide from outsiders amongst the branches of the delta and the scrubland, but it was difficult to escape from their own people, who knew the locations of every single village and fishing settlement. The Khazars' capable commanders had either been killed in the wars against Obadiah or had fled to the Hungarians. The ruins of the Khazar castle in the village of Simlyanskaya, on the right bank of the Don River, stand as a testament to the government's brutal treatment of its own subjects—

²⁰ Ibid., p. 148.

²¹ Ibid., p. 156.

It stands as a reminder of the suppression that took place. According to the person who discovered it, this castle was razed to the ground because its owner, Hazarya, had taken part in the struggle against the forced conversion of the Jews.²³ The suppression campaign launched by the Itil administration against the rebels was so thorough in the 9th century that the balance of power between the foreign administration and the defeated people was evident to both sides.

Even Arab travellers had easily discerned this situation at a glance. Children born of Jewish-Khazar marriages, and even the Jews themselves, had begun to identify as Khazars by the 10th century. For this reason, Arab geographers distinguished the 'black' and 'white' Khazars living together within the same state as two separate ethnic groups. (See above.) Consequently, it is necessary to use two separate terms: 'Jewish Khazars' and 'Turkic Khazars'. Before proceeding further, let us note that by the 11th century, the descendants of the Turkic Khazars (the indigenous people) had ceased to use their own ethnic name.²⁴ In this situation, the descendants of the Jews were using the "Khazar" ethnonym. However, this situation persisted until the end of the 11th century, when this ethnic group disappeared from the historical stage. This subject will be addressed later.

Memories, generally speaking, outlive people. Yet, all that remains of the pagan Khazars are the meagre burial grounds in the Volga delta. As for the Christian and Muslim Khazars, nothing remains. A strange thing indeed!

35. So, where is Art ?

In fact, whilst the kurgan tombs of the Huns stand as masterpieces, the 'stone shahmerans' of the Turks and Kipchaks have been unearthed in large numbers—

²² Ibid., p. 144.

²³ Plétnéva, S. A. *The Khazars*. Moscow, 1976, p. 63. Hereafter: Plétnéva, *The Khazars*.

²⁴ Gumilëv, L. N. *The Discovery of the Khazars*, pp. 176–178. Hereafter: Gumilëv, *The Discovery*.

²⁵ Rudenko, S. I. *The Culture of the Xunnu and the Noinulinsk Kurgan*. Moscow, Leningrad, 1962. Hereafter: Rudenko, *Culture*.

²⁶ Sher, Y. A. *Stone Sculptures of the Semirechye*. Moscow; Leningrad, 1966. Hereafter: Sher, *Stone Sculptures*.

²⁷ Fedorov-Davydov, F. A. *The Art of the Nomads and the Golden Horde*. Moscow, 1976.

Whilst Uyghur frescoes adorn the galleries of the Hermitage and Berlin museums, and even ancient Ugric ^{bas-reliefs} adorned with depictions of warriors and captives²⁸ have survived intact to the present day, why has nothing remained of the Khazars? There are no decorative elements on Khazar pottery;²⁹ the castles dating from the Khazar period that have been unearthed were constructed without any care,³⁰ yet there are absolutely no depictions of human figures. Is this normal, or is it simply a failure of archaeological research?

No, archaeologists have worked tirelessly. However, although the Khazars were by no means inferior to their steppe and mountain neighbours, in the 9th—

In the 10th century, there were no works of art made from durable materials in Khazaria, nor could there have been. This is because cultural artefacts only come into being when there are patrons willing to pay the artist for their labour. In Khazaria, however, only the ruling authorities could have afforded to pay for such works, yet they were in the hands of people who viewed figurative art with disdain.

The ancient Jews of Moses' time valued figurative art at least as much as their neighbours did. Indeed, they had even fashioned a golden calf and a bronze serpent statue which they intended to worship. Moses had been quite harsh with them on this matter. For on Mount Sinai, he had been commanded: 'You shall not make for yourselves any graven image!' (Exodus 34:17). His successors acted in the same way, and as a result, the Jews forgot about the plastic arts. Admittedly, they had retained an appreciation for art, but only to a limited extent. When the need arose to decorate their temples, this was addressed with formless shapes featuring a limited set of symbols and geometric ornamentation. In short, ancient Jewish art remained an abstract prototype.

Abstract art struggled to take hold even amongst the Jews themselves. Although they occasionally produced depictions of Baal and ^{Astarte*} and meaningful and gu-

28 A vase found in the Sentmikloš burial. Vienna Museum of Art History.

29 Gumilëv, L. N. *Monuments of Khazar Culture in the Volga Delta*//Proceedings of the State Museum, Vol. XX, L., 1965, pp. 49–51.

30 Bidjiev, X. X., Radlo, A. V. *Excavations at the Khumarinsky Fortress*//Archaeology of the North Caucasus. The Krupnovskiye Excavations in Krasnodar. Abstracts of Papers. Moscow, 1976, pp. 12–13.

* Baal: Meaning 'lord' or 'husband', Baal was the Canaanite god of fertility god of the Canaanites. Astarte: Also known as Ashtoreth. The Canaanite goddess of fertility, love and war. (trans.)

They intended to worship before images of the divine, but by the beginning of the Christian era their artistic sensibilities had completely vanished. Any kind of painting or sculpture left them in a state of shock. Consequently, they had no painters, and those who did exist had devoted themselves solely to calligraphy.

The Khazars, however, being devoid of aesthetic sensibility, not only failed to understand abstract art, but under the circumstances described above, it was neither possible for them to engage with the complex problems of abstraction, nor did they have any such desire. Nor was it possible for the finer arts to find an audience. For the Khazars were poor. And dressing up required a little money. They did not build monumental tombs either. They buried their dead on the Baire hills, which were soon covered by sand; they performed their worship not in temples, but on sacred rocks.³¹ As for the Khazars who adopted Christianity or Islam, they too performed their worship in the halupa [village houses] where they lived. True; there were stone mosques in the Itil region, but these were reserved for foreigners. The Byzantine engineer Petrona Kamatir, whilst building the Sarkel fortress in 834, had wished to construct a church within it for the Don Khazars, but permission was not granted. The stone columns and capitals he had brought for this purpose were cast aside into the steppe, and these were discovered in 1935 by M.I. Artamonoff.

But at the very least, they had to establish synagogues in large settlements. Of course they did! As for why these have not survived to the present day, the reader will understand after reading a few more pages.

36. The Dual Rule of the ‘ ’

As can be seen, the extensive regional survey method we have applied has proven its validity. As long as one deals solely with the subject of Khazaria, all manner of hypotheses can be put forward to explain the absence of relics. However, a synchronic perspective will define the boundaries of the ‘white spot’

31 “The chief clergy drew upon Jewish religious beliefs. These beliefs also applied to Isha (the king) and the commanders and state officials who formed his entourage. Ordinary Khazars, however, adhered to a religion similar to that of the Turks (the Magyars – L.G.).” – Hvolson D. A. *Izvestiya o xazarax, burtasax, bolgarax, madyarax, slavyanax ve russax* Abu-Ali Ahmeda ben-Omar Ibn-Dasta (Ibn-Rusta.-L.G.). St Petersburg, 1869, p. 17.

As for the suggestion that the Khazars were savage and possessed no civilisation—even though the assertion that the Khazars had no civilisation was put forward by the renowned Orientalist V.V. Grigoryeff on the basis of numerous Eastern sources—it will reasonably lose its validity.

V.V. Grigoryeff conducted his research according to the standards of his time. That is to say, he examined sources with an etymological focus rather than events reflecting the internal logic of the formation. It never even occurred to him that the Khazars themselves might have held more substantial views than the superficial observations made by the Persians and Arabs regarding Khazaria. True; as the Khazars were illiterate, they could not record their views in written sources. However, they demonstrated their stance against the so-called ‘dual power’ through their behaviour; yet to understand this, one must examine the history of events rather than the sources.

The notion of ‘dual power’, accepted at face value, has, upon thorough historical investigation, given rise to two interpretations that are entirely contradictory and must both be rejected.

According to B.A. Ribakoff, Khazaria was a “semi-nomadic, small parasitic state” that secured its livelihood through transit trade by “brutally exploiting its strategic advantage”. Our author situates Khazaria at the centre of the Kalmyk steppe and claims that there are no “archaeological traces of Khazar cities” to be found there.³² They have no actual presence on the steppe. In short, B. A. Rybakoff regards the Khazars as one of the steppe tribes and denies their right to participate in the culture of the medieval world.

The second view, on the contrary, portrays Khazaria as a fleeting light that shone briefly following the Khazars’ adoption of Judaism.³³

When we accept the Khazar people as an ethnic group possessing a state-like society, neither view can be considered correct. Firstly, in the state we refer to as the Khazar Khaganate, during the 9th and 10th centuries, the Khazars

32 Ribakov, B. A. *On the Role of the Khazar Khaganate in the History of Rus’* // Soviet Archaeology. Vol. XX, 1953, p. 131; Also: *Rus and Khazaria (On the Historical Geography of Khazaria)* // In Honour of B.D. Grekov on the Occasion of his 70th Birthday. Moscow, 1952.

33 Koestler, *Thirteenth*.

They were in the position of the most oppressed minority. Compared to the Khazars, the Alans, Burtas, Savirs and Guzes were virtually free tribes; the Khorezm mercenaries constituted a privileged class; whilst the members of the Jewish community – despite the presence of poor people amongst them – formed the ruling class.

Most importantly, all the major cities—from Canton to Granada and from Baghdad to Lyon and Ma-ine—belonged to Muslims (Arabs), Christian Greeks and Jews, but the Khazars possessed nothing of their own. No one even regarded them as human beings, and in any case, they considered themselves relatively at peace in the delta, which was covered with hills and thick reeds.

Itil was truly a city of luxury. Although its palaces were built of wood, felt and mudbrick, their interiors were lined with silk and sable fur. It was brimming with wine, sheep, sturgeon, beautiful dancers and young male servants. But all this was not for the Khazars, but for the Rahdânî merchants who were resting on the Volga after their long journey across the desert stretching from China over the mountains to Provence. The weak and impotent khan, who had come from the Achaea tribe of old and never married Jewish beauties, meant nothing. For the true ruler of the state was the 'peh', or rather, the melik. He and his viziers were of Jewish descent. They were the masters of this multi-ethnic state; partners in the most profitable commercial enterprises. Yet the melik represented not so much Khazaria as a super-ethnos living side by side in peace and attaining boundless wealth.

'Dual power' was a colossal lie concocted to deceive the people, who, despite the khan's increasing Judaisation, saw his face only once a year. On the remaining days of the year, the head of the Jewish community tormented the Khazars and neighbouring peoples with mercenaries whose costs the Khazar people were forced to bear. The Khazars were paying this money... but they could find no way out.

The Caspian tragedy has been described by us, but has not been fully clarified. The reasons why a small Jewish community, lacking sincere friends, despised by its neighbours and unsupported by its subjects, was able to monopolise international trade for 150 years and lead half of the Jewish communities scattered far and wide remain unexplained. Such an undertaking could not have been achieved without sincere allies and partners. It follows, then, that the Khazar Jews had such allies.

“The enemy of my enemy is my friend,” goes an old proverb. Even if they do not love us, or ask anything of us, by fighting our enemy, they are at the same time helping us. In the 9th–11th centuries, those opposed to Christianity, Islam and Hinayana Buddhism were the followers of the prophet and philosopher Mani, the founder of the anti-establishment views that attracted the most adherents. However, the Jews themselves were also opposed to any form of anti-establishment doctrine. They loved only themselves, their own deeds and their own future in this world. They had developed a principle of secrecy to exalt their own people. This was a weapon they had borrowed from their fiercest enemies, the Hellenistic Gnostics. Deception was also their weapon, but only against gentiles* and akumas. The Jews knew that Manichaeism was gnawing away at all positive ethnic systems from within. That is why they preferred to regard them as neighbours, but did not wish to turn a blind eye to their mingling amongst them. And since the Rahdanites were infiltrating all civilised countries like metastases, Manichaeism too must enter the same places, if not always. For this reason, we shall take a brief glimpse at the world surrounding poor Khazaria.

* The two peoples of antiquity, the Greeks and the Jews, referred to one another by different names. To the Greeks, those who were not like them were barbarians; to the Jews, those who were not Jewish were gentiles (non-Jews).

VII. THE RISE OF THE KIMERANS (839– 898)

37. The Four Khaganates

VIII. By the end of the century, the initiative in history had slipped from the hands of the Arab caliphs, but it was not the Byzantine or German emperors who seized it, but a new ethnic group whose name had never been heard before. At the beginning of the 9th century, fearsome raiders from Scandinavia—the Vikings—had appeared on the shores of the North Sea. New peoples began to emerge in the heart of Western Europe, whilst in Austria, the first and unsuccessful attempt by the Reconquistadors to conquer the Iberian Peninsula had taken place. If we connect these regions in motion with a clear line according to their chronological sequence, we obtain a new axis of passionate impulse that emerged entirely throughout the 9th century.

A letter written by the German Ludwig to the Macedonian Vasileus (871) indicates that there were four ^{khanates}¹ in Eastern Europe at that time: the Avars,² the Normans³ (i.e. the Rus'), the Khazars and the Bulgars (along the Danube

1 Khan (Turkic Qayan)—sovereign ruler. Literally meaning 'great', corresponding to the Siou-Dakota term (Wakan). See Kari-mullin, A.G. *On the question of the genetic origin of certain Native American languages in relation to Turkic languages*// *Voprosy geografii SVA. L.*, 1976, p. 116> Gumilev, L. N. *The Dakota and the Xunni*//*Tam 'e*, pp. 123–125.

2 Ludwig has taken into account the remnants of the Avar ethnic group that survived the blow dealt by the Franks in 795
Avar ethnic group. These Avars continued to live in Pannonia under the rule of their own khans until the mid-9th century. (See Weber, *General History*, V/432).

3 10th-century German chroniclers identify the Rus with the Rugians (see § 27). Y. Ç. Skrijinskaya, however, speculates that the Rugians arrived from Scandinavia before the Goths. (See Yordan, pp. 192, 254). However, in the 2nd century, the Rugians were living in the Baltic Sea, having abandoned the name 'Ruga Island' (Rugen). They should be classified not among the nomadic Sarmatians, but among the Germanic groups

(since Ludwig does not recognise the Great Bulgars near the Kama); for these khanates were, like the first three empires (including the Caliphate), the last states touched by the 'passioner' impulse. Only a blow delivered by a new spark of ethnogenesis could have kept them standing. Therefore, before discussing the tragedy that ushered in the new era, let us examine who ignited this spark of ethnogenesis and attempt to outline the opportunities they possessed and the initiatives they undertook.

The Avar Khaganate, plundered by the Franks and squeezed by the Slavs, had become little more than a symbolic entity. Nevertheless, it served as a barrier that halted the raids by Germanic feudal lords in the Middle Danube region.

The situation of the Bulgarian Khaganate was somewhat better. This was because the first Bulgarian khans, Asparukh and Krum, had not strained their relations with their Slavic subjects; on the contrary, they had stood shoulder to shoulder with them against the Greeks. The Bulgars were increasingly meddling in European politics, sometimes by supporting the Moravian Slavs against the Germans in 863, and sometimes by sending auxiliary troops to assist the German King Ludwig against rebellious feudal lords. The only obstacle facing the Bulgarian prince Boris was his paganism, which he had replaced with Orthodoxy in 864. Naturally, this brought the Papacy into conflict with the Bulgarians and the German kingdom, but the alliance treaty with the Byzantine Empire had already been broken by 894.

The Bulgarian administration had attempted to make contact with Rome, but its Slavic subjects were even more alien to the Germans than the Greeks. Nevertheless, the war with the Greeks continued, bringing victories but also unexpected and crushing consequences for Bulgaria.

The situation had become so complex that it would completely deadlock Bulgaria's international position. For Bulgaria had been one of its best allies. It had now broken away from the Eurasian super-ethnos and had failed to align itself with the Byzantine axis. It was forced to rely on its own strength and to fight not only in the south but also on its northern borders, where Khazar diplomacy held sway.

This is evident among the settled peoples. It is difficult to say that the Rugians were Germanic-speaking; but if this were the case, one would have to accept that this was an ancient language belonging to the Germans prior to the emergence of the Indo-European community. However, it is certain that they were not Slavic.

The Magyars, who broke away from the Khazars between 822 and 826, and the Pechenegs, who were held by the Khazars in the lower reaches of the Dnieper, were a significant headache for the Bulgars.

However, the Pechenegs and the Khazars were not to remain at peace for long. Iranian geographers such as Ibn Rusta, Gardizi and the anonymous author of **Hudud al-Alam** record that the Khazars organised annual raids into Pecheneg territory to capture slaves for sale in Islamic lands. Around 889, the Khazars, in alliance with the Guz, defeated the Pechenegs;⁵ the Pechenegs who crossed westwards to the shores of the Black Sea were then forced into a life-and-death struggle with the Magyars.

In 893, the Khazars had formed an alliance with the Magyars and the Greeks against the Pechenegs and the Bulgars. The Khazar ruler sent an army by sea to Byzantium to fight against the Bulgars; however, the Greek-Khazar army was defeated by the Bulgars, and the Khazar prisoners were treated particularly harshly, with all of their noses cut off before the exchange of prisoners.⁶ Emperor Leo VI, in retaliation for this action, dispatched a fleet in 894 carrying the Hungarians under the command of Arpad and Kursan to the right flank of the Danube, that is, to Bulgaria. The Hungarians defeated King Symeon, advanced as far as Preslav, plundered the entire region, killed everyone in their path, and took many captives whom they sold to the Byzantines. Symeon, swallowing his anger, offered a peace treaty; however, in 897, whilst the Magyar cavalry were on another campaign, the Pechenegs and Bulgarians attacked Lebedia, slaughtering the remaining Hungarian men, women, children and the elderly. The Hungarian men returning from the campaign abandoned their blood-soaked lands and crossed into Pannonia in 899, where they had established Hungary. There, they overthrew the Moravian kingdom and took young Slavic women as wives. Thus, a new Hungarian people was formed, incorporating the remnants of the Avars. Throughout the entire 10th century, Hungary—defeated and plundered by the Pechenegs and Bulgars—marched from victory to victory, save for the defeat by Poland in 955, which only partially curtailed its independence. But the situation in victorious Bulgaria was entirely different.

4 Artamonov, *Khazars*, p. 354.

5 Constantine Porphyrogenitus. *"On the Themí" and "On the Peoples"* // *Studies in Society Based on the Study of Ancient Manuscripts*. Moscow, 1899, p. 15> cited in Artamonov M.I. *History of the Khazars*, p. 349.

6 Artamonov, *The Khazars*, p. 347.

Although the Bulgarian Tsar Symeon (893–927) achieved brilliant victories, he had not succeeded in winning the wars. Romanos Lekapenos had incited the Serbs and Croats to revolt against the Bulgarian Tsar. In the eyes of the Slavs, Symeon was a foreigner, a representative of the nomadic world, and for this reason they had taken action against the Bulgarians. But to the Pechenegs, too, Symeon was a Slav who had forgotten the steppe culture and traditions. As Byzantium maintained its trade relations with the Pechenegs via Chersonesos, they were allies of Constantinople. Bulgaria, however, was isolated.

The Magyars on the Tisza were enemies. The Slavic tribes living in the lower reaches of the Dniester and Danube—the Tverians and Ulichs—were also not allies of the Bulgarians. The price paid for the victories achieved was very heavy: the finest Bulgarian warriors had perished in battle. As for the Slavs around the Danube... they too had, of course, begun to dream of a peaceful life, free from anger and malice.

The passionate Slavs, who were in the inertial phase of ethnogenesis, did not wish to plunder their neighbours; they merely sought to impose their own views. The dream of building a new world is always at odds with reality. In the Middle Ages, the foundation of such opposition lay in Gnostic teachings. As early as the 4th century, in most of the monasteries of Thrace and Macedonia, the Euchitae or Massalians—Gnostics—were living and teaching. Their teachings, fused with the ancient Slavic dualism, had given rise to Bogomilism. Bogomilism underwent a long period of development and was influenced by Paulicianism and Manichaeism. In short, the Bogomil tragedy began in the 10th century.⁷

As for the difference between Hungary and Bulgaria: Hungary was, in the 10th century, a remnant of the Great Steppe situated in the heart of Europe. Consequently, the Hungarians managed to survive by correctly assessing that they were surrounded by enemies. Bulgaria, however, was not a monolith in the 10th century, but rather a mixture of different super-ethnic groups at various stages of ethnogenesis. This is why Asparuh's forces

⁷ was not in the 11th century, as some suppose. For King Peter, acting on the advice of Patriarch Theodosius, imprisoned the Bogomils. Source: Presbyter Kozma. *Bèséda na novoyavlennuyu eres Bogumila* (see *History of the Macedonian People*, Skopje, 1975, pp. 37–38).

While the descendants of their conqueror friends threw themselves into victorious battles under Symeon's banner, the Slavs, captivated by the allure of the Bogomils' beliefs, spoke their minds, and this marked the beginning of a catastrophe we shall discuss later.

Drawn into the global struggle between ethnic systems and anti-systems, Bulgaria had put forward its own original worldview, which, merely in appearance, resembled the familiar doctrines of the Near East.

Manichaeans maintain that there is an eternal conflict between God and the Devil; they called the evil Devil who created the material world 'Satan'. This view led not only to nihilistic behaviour towards the environment surrounding the Manichaeans, but also towards themselves, their families, their descendants, and indeed everyone sincerely attached to them. The number of those who followed such a doctrine could not have been large. Thus, Bogomilism took root in Bulgaria as an independent religion, a dualistic view quite distinct from the Manichaean prototype that had previously settled in Macedonia (the community near the Dragovitsa River).

Contrary to the doctrine of the eternal conflict between Light and Darkness, the Bogomils put forward the view that Satanael, the chief of the angels created by God, rebelled out of pride and was cast into the water because the earth (soil) did not yet exist. Satanael created the earth and humankind, but lacked the power to breathe life into them. Therefore, he appealed to God, promising to be obedient. God breathed the spirit into humans, and thus Satanael created Cain. In response, God expelled Jesus—a spiritless being—from his mouth to keep the spiritless angels under control. Jesus entered through one of Mary's ears and exited through the other, assuming human form whilst maintaining his ethereal appearance. The angels seized Satanael, tore away the 'el'-'tek' appendage within which power (likely mystical power) was concealed, and cast him into hell. Now he was no longer Satanael, but Satan. Jesus, too, abandoned his mother's physical womb—belonging to the world Satanael had created—and returned to his Father's womb. The conclusion drawn from this vision was unexpected, yet simple: "Slaughter the Byzantines!"

Not all Bulgarians were Bogomils; but those who were proved sufficient to bring about the fateful catastrophe that led to Bulgaria's loss of independence in the 11th century.

What needs to be written about the Khazar Khaganate, the third khaganate, has been detailed. The only thing to add is that it was the most active and successful khanate of the 9th century. The Khazar Khanate, skilfully utilising the iconoclastic emperors of Byzantium, had established the fortress of Sarkel on the Don in 834 through their agency. The first Latin record concerning Judaism in Khazaria dates from the year 866. It seems, then, that the Jewish princes had ceased to hide behind the broad backs of the khans. *Indeed, even the khans themselves could only sit on the throne because their mothers or grandmothers were Jewish, and they were incorporated into the Itil Jewish community as a matter of custom.* The borders of the 9th-century Khazar Khaganate – which encompassed a rather vast area – can be clearly delineated in their entirety.

Information regarding the Rus' Khaganate, which left no trace of its existence, is scarcer. Consequently, details concerning it must be sought in the works of writers from neighbouring peoples, particularly those of geographers. Such information does exist, but it is rather fragmentary. In 839, envoys of the 'Khagan of Rus' were received at the court of Ludwig the Pious in Ingelheim. As the direct route had likely been blocked by enemies—probably the Magyars and perhaps the Magyars' enemies, the Ulichs and Tverians—they had travelled here via a long route from Constantinople. It was believed that these envoys were Swedes, who were at war with the Frankish emperor at the time. There is no information regarding the subsequent fate of the envoys. It must be acknowledged that the Rus' Khaganate was isolated from the lands known to geographers. It was cut off from the Muslim East by the Khazars, from Byzantium by the Bulgars, and from Germania by the Avars. This explains why information about the 9th-century Russians is so incomplete and fragmented. And this also explains why 9th-century German authors confused the forgotten Rossomons with the Swedes. The Rossomans and the Swedes were Scandinavians, even though the ancestors of the former had left their homeland as early as the 1st–2nd centuries.

IX. Relations between the Slavs and the Russians during that century were clearly hostile. Arab and Persian geographers also provide information on this subject. This information has been excellently compiled by A.P. Novoséltseff.⁸ We shall rely to a certain extent on this work, which we also consider authoritative. Ibn Rusta, Mukaddasi, "Hu-

8 See Novoseltsev, *Vostochnye istočniki// Drevnerusskoe gosudarstvo i ego me'dunarodnoe znahenie*, pp. 355–419.

dud al-‘Alam, based on the fragmentary information provided by Gardizi and Mervezi, states that the Rus’ “attacked the Slavs, sailed to their country by ship, landed, took them captive, and brought them to Khazaria and Bulgaria, where they were sold.”⁹ In response to this aggressive party, the author of *Mu’jam at-Tawarih*, written in 1126, says the following about the Slavs: “... and the Slav came to the Rus’ with the intention of settling. The Rus’ informed him that the land was too small (not enough for two people). The Kymars (?!-L.G.) and the Khazars gave the same reply. A dispute and war broke out between them. The Slav fled and came to the lands now known as Slavya. Then he said: ‘I shall settle here and take my revenge easily.’”¹⁰ For this reason, relations between the Rus and the Khazars were initially friendly in the 9th century. The information provided by the Persian writer is as follows: “The Rus and the Khazars were of the same mother and father. Later, the Rus multiplied, and as these lands, which they found to their liking, became insufficient for them, they wrote a letter to the Khazars and asked for a part of their country to settle in.”¹¹ And they settled in Crimea, near Simferopol, known as Scythian Naples.

It is readily apparent that the ‘barbarian people’¹³ living on the banks of the Itil (Volga)¹² River—between the ancient inhabitants of Eastern Europe, the Kama Bulgars, and the Slavs (or, more precisely, the ‘Sakâlibe’)—were the Russians. Furthermore, “Kuyaba”, that is, Kiev, was not a city of the Russians and, according to Mesudi, likely belonged to the Volhynian Slavic Dulebs, who were ruled by a king named Dira, or Dir.¹⁴ Building on this point, A.P. Novosélt-syeff concludes that the “islands”¹⁵—or, to put it more accurately, the lands of the Rus’—were situated “somewhere in the northern part of Eastern Europe”. However, by the end of the 9th century, Kyiv, first under Askold and later under Oleg,

9 Ibid., pp. 397–401.

10 Ibid., p. 391.

11 Ibid., p. 401.

12 According to Biruni, who gave the Volga the name “Nehr es-sakâlibe”, A. P. Novoselt-syeff objects to this identification because he translates the word “saklabiyye” as “Slavs” (see *ibid.*, p. 370), he objects to this identification; however, there were no Slavs in the middle reaches of the Volga in the 9th–11th centuries. Nevertheless, since the ethnonym “slavyane” is written as “slaviya”, his translation may also be considered correct. (see § Rahdanians).

13 Ibn Hawqal’s term. See Novoseltsiyev, *Vostochniye istochniki*, p. 404.

14 Artamonov, *Khazars*, pp. 367–369.

15 The term “islands” should be understood to mean isolated regions enclosed by defined boundaries.

It had been captured by the Russians.¹⁶ This period has been clarified by other sources, which allocate more space to Russia, which was divided into three groups. The first is the Kyiv centre led by Askold, who attacked Constantinople in 860 and was subjugated by Oleg in 882. The second is the region of the Ilmen Slavs, Slaviya. This is recorded in toponymic works as Old Rus (Staraya Russa). The third is Arsa. (This is a matter of dispute, not yet settled.) According to A.P. Novoséltseyeff, it was situated between what is now Rostov and Beloozero [Akgöl].¹⁷

In the 9th century, the Russians and Slavs were scarcely known. By the 10th and 11th centuries, however, the Slavs were well known to all European and Byzantine geographers. It is necessary to explain to a reader of history books who these Russians were. Bishop Adalbert, in 959, refers to Olga as the queen of the Rugians.¹⁸ The English prince Edward (989–1017), meanwhile, says of Yaroslav the Wise: ‘He is the king of the Rugian lands, which we call Rus’.¹⁹ However, it is not known who these Rugians were, nor whether they fought against the Goths in the 2nd–5th centuries.²⁰ Similarly, their relations with the Rossomans—allies of the Huns and, presumably, the Ants in the 4th century—have not been clarified.

Fifteen hundred years have passed... yet the Russians are still perceived as the enemies of the Slavs, the vassals of the Khazars, the friends of the Varangians, and the *druzhinas* of these two peoples. Firstly, there is no basis whatsoever for equating the Scandinavian Varangians with the indigenous Russians. On the contrary, by the 10th century, there was extensive intermingling among the victorious Russians, Slavs, Kievan Rus’ and Novgorodians, and moreover, the Slavic language and customs were supplanting the others. The Old Russian State was a Slavic state that had inherited its ethnonym from the Rus’ only in the sense implied by the phrase “the Polans are now Rus’”, and it was ruled by the Rurik dynasty. Although the process of mutual assimilation was not straightforward, and the *Slyavyano-Rus’*

16 It would appear that the year 852 must be accepted as the date of the conquest of Kiev by the Rus’. For it was in that year that the lands began to be referred to as ‘Rus’ lands’ (PVL, Book I, p. 17).

17 Novoseltyev, *op. cit.*, pp. 417–419.

18 Shusharin, V. P. *The Old Russian State in Western and Eastern European Medieval Sources* // *The Old Russian State and Its International Significance*, p. 422. Hereafter: Shusharin, *The Old Russian State*.

19 *Ibid.*, p. 429.

20 Yordan, pp. 192–193.

Although it took more than a century, marked by turmoil due to neighbours such as the cunning Khazars and the savage Varangians, the shared life had forged both peoples into a single ethnic group.

As early as the 10th century, contemporary writers generally depicted the Russians and the Slavs as two distinct peoples living side by side. It would appear, therefore, that the situation here was similar to that of the Turks and the Khazars, who were distinguished from one another by quite significant differences. The Turks had introduced the concept of 'passioner' to the Khazars. The Rossomans and Slavs were equally passionate, both during wars and in the course of ethnic interactions. This was because both had been shaped within the same sphere of passionate influence. It is for this reason that the Turks and Khazars remained friends, whilst the Polans and Rossomans merged into a single ethnic group.

Here, then, is the 'chronological relationship' or 'logic of events'. The Ant or Polyan tribal federation, which also incorporated the Rossomans, emerged as an East Slavic ethnic group as a result of the impetus of the 2nd century; at the same time as the Byzantines and alongside them, they entered a decisive phase that culminated in victory over their common enemies, the Avars; following this event, the Slavs spread as far as the shores of the Black Sea. Unlike the Byzantines, the Polans successfully navigated the transition crisis from one phase to the next, but subsequently suffered a blow that nearly led to their extinction.

Around 800–809, the Slavs experienced a second wave of migration eastwards from the banks of the Elbe.²¹ A.A. Shakhmatov argues that the Slavs fled from the Franks of Charlemagne.²² The achievements of Charlemagne and his barons have been exaggerated by chroniclers and subsequent historians. We shall see that the Franks were unable to hold their ground on the right banks of the Ebro, the Tisza (Theiss) or the Elbe. Consequently, one must look for other reasons behind the Slavs' migration to this country, which has a completely different climate—extremely cold in winter (with temperatures below freezing) and very hot in summer.

It is the level of passionate tension that sustains the unity of an ethnos, and particularly that of a super-ethnos. If this level drops, the ethnos fragments; but

21 The names of the ancient Slavic peoples ended in 'ne': Polyane (the Pol-yans), Drevlyane (the Drevlyans), Severyane (the Severyans), Slovene (the Slovenes), and so on. Later, this suffix was replaced by "-i": Kiriviči (the Kirivičs), Radimiči (the Radimičs), and so on. Only the Tvertsi (the Tverians) are an exception to this rule.

This fragmentation manifests itself primarily in regional characteristics. In such cases, a portion of the energy is expended and consumed through migration. This was the case in the 17th century with the Anglo-Americans and in other similar instances.

This is also the reason, from an ethnic-historical perspective, why the Vyatič and Radimič peoples changed the lands they inhabited.

The Eastern Slavs were still at a high level of passionate tension in the 8th century. The scarcity of sources forces us to resort to chronological interpolation; yet this method yields good results. The ancestors of the Ants, who defeated the Goths alongside the Rossomans and Huns in the 4th century, had established their own khanate—that is, their independent state centred on Kiev—by the early 9th century, and the name of their ruler was Dir. If we bear in mind that we are comparing the rise of this branch of the Slavs with the passionate impulse that triggered the Great Migrations and paved the way for the emergence of confessional communities in Byzantine Asia Minor, this will lead us to the phase of rupture in the 8th century and the phase of inertia in the 10th century. Indeed, that was the case.

A high level of passionerism gave the Slavs an advantage over the Eastern Balts (Yatvags, Golads) and the Finno-Ugrians (Merya, Muroma, Ves), and led to the amalgamation of the Slavic tribes into a single Old Russian people, which persisted until the end of the 10th century. However, the Slavs and the Khazars had not yet clashed with one another in the 8th century and did not pose a threat to one another.

The legend concerning Rurik, the commander of the 'Varangian-Rus' whom a certain Gostomysl from Novgorod is said to have invited to restore order, is perceived today almost as if it were true. It is argued that the phrase "Vsta grad na grad" (vsta grat nagrat) in the chronicles refers to the Varangians exiled from Ladoga around the 850s.²³ Rurik himself was the ruler of a principality bordering the Frisians, Scandinavians, Germans and Slavs—

22 Shahmatov, A. A. *"The Tale of Bygone Years" and its sources* // Proceedings of the Department of Old Russian Literature (TODRL). Vol. 1, L., 1940, p. 29; cited in PVL. Vol. 2, p. 108> Artamonov, M. I. *Questions of the Settlement of the Eastern Slavs and "Soviet Archaeology"* // Problems of General History: A Historiographical Collection. L., 1967, pp. 29–30.

23 Lebedyev, F. S. *The Viking Age in Northern Europe*. L., 1985. From , Lebedyev, *The Viking Age*.

is identified with Rerik of Jutland.²⁴ According to this account, Rurik returned westwards from Novgorod between 870 and 873 to hold talks with Charles the Bald and the German king Ludwig.²⁵ Presumably the talks were unsuccessful, as Rurik returned to Novgorod between 875 and 879 and governed the city until his death. Only the last account is certain to be true.

I wish this assumption were true. It is sad to bid farewell to the views that took root in our minds during our childhood. But if this assumption were true, then the descriptions of medieval writers—who posited that Rurik and his dynasty were not Swedish or German, but rather the descendants of the ancient Rugians, the enemies of the Goths and likely representatives of the ethnogenetic phase preceding the Great Migrations—would be accepted (by the 3rd century, this people had long since become a relic-persistent group). Perhaps future research will confirm this hypothesis, which we are currently unable to either confirm or refute.

38. The Rus- ic Khaganate

On the eve of the 8th–9th centuries, the Khazars had established themselves on the borders of the Rus territories, centred in Crimea. At that time, the Rus were engaging in notable activities, including organising naval expeditions to the shores of the Black Sea. In 790, they attacked the well-fortified city of Suroj (Sulak), then turned towards the southern shores, and in 840 captured and plundered Amastris, the wealthy trading centre in Paphlagonia (Asia Minor); but in accordance with the treaty concluded in 842, they returned part of the booty they had taken and the prisoners. “Those who came to the shores of the Evksin (Black Sea) burned and destroyed those places, and the fleet of the Ross (the word ‘Ross’ here refers to the crude and savage Scythians living in Northern Taur) ravaged the coasts. And it shook the very capital with fear.”²⁶ In 852, the Rus’ captured the Slavic city of Kyiv.

On 18 July 860, the Rus’ besieged Constantinople with 360 ships, but on 25 July they lifted the siege and returned to their lands

24 Lovmyanskiy, G. *Rerik of Jutland and Rurik of Novgorod*// Scandinavian Collection. Vol. Tallinn, 1963. Cited from Lebedev G. S. *Op. cit.*, p. 214.

25 Lebedev, *The Viking Age*, p. 214.

26 Skilita; *History of Byzantium*, II/228.

They returned. None of the attacks launched by the Russians against the Byzantines had been more successful than this one, and all subsequent ones (with the exception of the 907 campaign, of which the Greeks were not even aware) had ended in defeat.²⁷ It is conceivable that the trade agreement attributed by the chronicler to Oleg was also concluded at precisely that time.

Subsequent events turned against the Russians. In particular, after 860, the war against the Pechenegs—who at that time were merely mercenaries of the Khazar khan—proved to be a complete failure. In Kiev, “there was famine and weeping”²⁸ and at that time, the Orthodox missionaries sent by Patriarch Photios converted a portion of the Kievan population to Christianity.²⁹ This signified friendship and alliance with Byzantium, yet a complete conversion did not take place, owing both to the opposition of the strengthening pagan movement and the aggressiveness of Judaism.

Nevertheless, the Christian colony in Kiev would survive. It would grow and strengthen over the course of a century and, in 988, would have its final say at the crucial moment.

In the 9th century, the Russian state had few friends and many enemies. It should not be assumed that the most dangerous enemies would necessarily emerge from among its neighbours. Minor skirmishes, blood feuds and mutual raids for the purpose of plunder certainly inflict considerable harm on certain individuals; but as a rule, since both sides regard each other as detestable, they do not lead to wars of annihilation. Consequently, only foreigners belonging to another super-ethnos are viewed as direct targets for action. Indeed, in the 19th century, the Americans, just as they did with wild wolves, offered rewards for the scalps of Native Americans or used Negroes as pack animals. Yet even the super-ethnic differences of the 10th century had not, as the 19th-century humanists did, caused the deaths of these people. Consequently, only wars between super-ethnic groups backed by grandiose confessional fatwas were waged with such ruthlessness. The Muslims, having declared ‘jihad’ against the Greeks, slaughtered the men in the cities they conquered, whilst selling the women and children in slave markets. Saxon and Danish knights cut off the heads of the Lutici and Bodriči—

27 See *History of Byzantium*. Vol. II, p. 230 and note 19.

28 *The Complete Collection of Russian Chronicles* (hereinafter: TRVK). Vol. IX. Moscow; Leningrad, 1965, p. 9.

29 Golubinskiy, Y. Y. *History of the Russian Church*. Moscow, 1901. Vol. I. The Early Period. First Half-Volume, pp. 51–52.

had done; the Anglo-Saxons had also dealt with the Celts in this manner. But the conquerors, too, could not expect mercy should the fortunes of war turn against them.

At the outset, Russia was somewhat fortunate. In the final quarter of the 9th century, when the activities of the Western European 'super-ethnos' had intensified considerably, the Bulgarians were supporting the Greeks, the Avars the Germans, and the Bodrichs the Dacians. The Norwegian Vikings had turned their attention westwards. This was because the routes from the 'Varangians to the Greeks' and again from the 'Varangians to the Khazars' passed via the narrow Lovat and Mologa rivers. The waterways, which required the boats to be rowed back, were at that time completely cut off from Norway. The conditions for fighting the local population were extremely unfavourable.

The Khazar Jews had emerged as the winners during the division of political power. By fostering friendly relations with the Magyars, they had channelled the latter's military energy against the peoples of Western Europe. At this time, the last Carolingians in Western Europe were, as a rule, less concerned than anyone else about the security of their own peasants and feudal lords, who were dissatisfied with the imperial regimes. The Khazar administration succeeded in forging an alliance with the Tverians and the Ulichians, and had made the trade route stretching from Italy to Spain significant for Jewish merchants. And finally, in 913, with the help of the Guz, the Khazars routed the Pechenegs, who lived on the banks of the Yaik and Emba and controlled the crossroads of the Volga-China caravan route.

There remained one final obstacle to be overcome for the Khazar administration: the Rus Khaganate, centred in Kiev. War with the Rus was inevitable, but the benefits that a crushing victory would bring to the Volga trading companies were too numerous to count. Naturally, the downtrodden Khazars, who did not participate in such activities, could have no interest in these benefits. The ruling elite kept them under their thumb thanks to the mercenaries they had brought from Gurgan, forcing them to pay heavy taxes. In this way, they always reserved the most fertile lands for themselves, increased their revenues, and completely severed themselves from the subjugated peoples.

It is conceivable that relations between these octopus merchants and Russia could not have followed a rosy course. Signs of war had already become apparent in the 9th century, when the Khazar administration began to fortify Sarkel Fortress against its western enemies. The events that followed

, the period up to 860 is scarcely reflected in the sources. It is likely that 'the balance of power swung now in their favour, now in ours', but we lack detailed information regarding the events. All we can do is attempt to roughly determine the balance of power and the direction in which events were developing. We cannot do more than that. Consequently, for the period after 860, we have before us a rich tapestry of events ripe for analysis and interpretation.

39. Hazarya's New Friends in the ' '

The joint rule of Obadiah and Hanuka had inherited a dangerous tradition regarding international relations and influences. The Turkic khans from the Ačina dynasty and their Karaite ally Bulan had failed to grasp the complex economic problems. They had merely defended their country and people against the Muslims attacking from the south and the Pechenegs raiding from the east, beyond the Urals. In the 8th century, Khazaria's natural ally was Byzantium, which was engaged in conflict with the Arabs on one side and Asparuh's Bulgars—who had fled the Khazars—on the other. For this reason, the spread of Orthodoxy among the Alans and the Khazars encountered no obstacles. By the mid-8th century, the Khazar-Khorezm (Dorosky) metropolitanate had been established, bringing seven bishoprics under its jurisdiction.³⁰ Cultural contacts were the result of political alliances.³¹

The Turkic-Khazars had not established relations with the Far East or the Far West. In 745, a fierce war had broken out along the Chinese border between the Turkic Khaganate and the Tang Empire. Subsequently, the An Lushan Rebellion, which broke out between 756 and 763, plunged China into bloodshed, and following this, Tibet and Uyghuristan also entered the fray. At that time, there was nothing of interest in the Far East.

The Frankish Merovingian Kingdom and the Lombard Kingdom were rotting from within and coming to an end, whilst in England the Angles and Saxons were slaughtering the Celts with the sword—

30 Tolstov, S. P. *In the Footsteps of the Ancient Khorezmian Civilisation*. Moscow, 1948, p. 229. Hereafter: Tolstov, *In the Footsteps*.

31 Yakut notes that the Khazars were Christian and Muslim, and to some extent pagan, with a very small number of Jews. (See Artamonov, *Xazar*, p. 280). Dīmeškī, however, states that the Khazar warriors were Muslim and the townspeople Jewish (ibid.), though he likely considered only the inhabitants of the capital.

The situation in the West, through which he passed, was no better. However, the situation would change around the year 800. For after Charlemagne [Charles the Great] had subjugated the Saxons and Lombards, he had taken the imperial crown. As the final years of Charlemagne's reign coincided with the days when Obadiah carried out his coup d'état, these two newly emerged empires had established friendly relations, and Charlemagne had issued a special edict as a token of this, permitting the Jews in his realm to live according to their own customs.³² In the days that followed, the Jews would continue their alliance with the Carolingians until their downfall in the 10th century.

At that time, the most active were the southern peoples. The rise in the level of fanaticism among the descendants of the Arab conquerors had caused the Abbasid Caliphate to implode from within; however, the remnants of the caliphate had become more dangerous to their neighbours than a vast centralised socio-political system. For the African Berbers and Tuaregs*, the Central Asian Turks, and the mountain peoples of the Pamir and Hindu Kush, Islam was no longer a symbol of oppression and plunder. This was because an opportunity had arisen to utilise their distinct Shi'ite views as a banner in the war against Sunni Baghdad.

The Africans, having broken away from the Caliphate, had seized Sicily, invaded Italy after driving out the Lombards, and put the Frankish armies of Louis II to the sword. Indeed, in 840, the African fleet, which had advanced as far as the mouth of the Tiber, came within a hair's breadth of capturing Rome itself. In the same year, the Persians—the Samanids, who had converted to Islam—had conquered Isficab (Sayram, near present-day Chimkent). Meanwhile, the Caliphs of Baghdad were expending all their power and material resources on suppressing the rebellions of their fellow Muslim subjects and on the perpetual conflicts they were waging with the Byzantines.

Just as tectonic fractures in the Earth's crust give rise to subterranean magma through fissures, so too, at the border between two super-ethnic groups and two great cultures, movements had emerged that were almost forgotten and buried in the earth: the Hurremites in Azerbaijan and the Paulicians in Asia Minor. There were neither organised ties nor tendencies towards political cooperation between these and similar groups. One was merely a remnant of the Mazdakites; the other, the Marcionites, adopted certain disciplines of the Gnostics—

32 Veber, *General History*, V/342.

* In the text, "tüarek". Although this word has passed into Western languages in this form, the correct term is "Tavarik", the plural of "tarik". Its meaning is 'that which suddenly appears in the darkness'. (trans.)

However, both, in terms of their ideological principles and ultimate aims, were based on the ancient teachings of the Manichaeans: to divide the world into black and white, and to ensure the victory of the luminous source they believed themselves to represent through bloody executions.

So, why would these movements be of concern to the Khazar leadership? The Hurremites were the descendants of the Mazdakites, who had been allies of the Khazar Jews between 494 and 529. Whereas the Arabs had launched religious persecution against the Jews in 690; the Greeks, meanwhile, had forced the Jews to renounce their faith as early as 723. Well, the time had come to settle the accounts of the past. Yet, Obadiah and Hanukkah had opted to develop commercial relations with Baghdad and to accept the assistance of engineers sent by the Byzantines—their former allies whom the Turk-Khazars had never rejected—who were faithful to historical traditions, during the founding of Sarkel. Now, values had shifted; self-interest, loyalty and bravery had taken their place. What suited the Jews best, however, was that the Greeks were fighting against the Bulgars and Arabs, the enemies of the Khazars. Theophilos had recaptured the city of Samosata in 837, but Caliph al-Mutasim had slaughtered the Byzantine army at Dazimon [Dazmana] and, in 838, had captured Amorion (in the centre of Anatolia), the empire's second-largest city after Constantinople. It was during these days when the wars raged on in a bloody manner that the Hurremites were allies of the Greeks, and the Paulicians were allies of the Arabs.³³ The Bulgarian khan

33 If we consider the religious views of the Paulicians, it becomes apparent that they differed from the Manichaeans, bore similarities to the early Gnostics, and were closely linked to Mazdakism and Judaism. However, the subtleties of the theological views propagated by the Paulician theologians were alien and incomprehensible to the masses, whose sole concern was to wage war against Byzantium. To present themselves as Orthodox, it was sufficient to use material that everyone could understand—such as the source of eternal evil—rather than God's creations. This thesis linked the Paulicians to the Manichaeans and Cathars, but the fact that their doctrines were drawn from Marcion's lost thesis had left an indelible mark on their ideology. Although they do not reject the Gospel, it is not possible to regard the Paulicians as Christians, just as one cannot regard the Manichaeans as such. The Paulicians regarded the cross as a symbol of the wicked because Christ was crucified upon it; they rejected icons and liturgical rites, did not believe in the sacraments of baptism, and defined the consumption of bread and wine, as well as other material objects of worship, as 'evil'. The early Paulicians, the church, the authorities, and those in the clergy who approved of the sale of young men and women taken captive to the Arabs, and the

Persian,* entered Macedonia and dealt a blow to the Byzantines; the Khazars, who never harboured hostility towards the Bulgarians but were friends of the Greeks, remained spectators to the events. Yet the Khans of Achina never abandoned their friends in times of trouble.

40. As for the Byzantines

There, the schism that had led to the tragedy of iconoclasm in 843 had come to an end. This event had cost the Byzantine Empire dearly; the Bulgar khan Krum had laid siege to the walls of Constantinople in 813; and the Spanish Arab-Berber pirates had captured Grit in 826 and subsequently begun to use it as a base for their attacks on other islands in the Aegean Sea. The Berbers of the Atlas Mountains invaded Sicily in 827 and subsequently set out to conquer Southern Italy. The Bulgarians had ravaged Macedonia. Meanwhile, the Emperor was occupied in Constantinople with smashing icons and persecuting priests. But all this would pass, and by 843, the fervour would begin to subside.

The easing of the Passioner crisis worked in the Byzantine Empire's favour. Thanks to the Council of Constantinople in 843, the thawing of relations between the secular authorities and the Church had made it possible to direct the system's vast resources towards their normal course. In 860, Saint Cyril sent an Orthodox mission to the Khazars, and in 864, he and his brother Methodius united with the Orthodox Christians of Moravia. In 864–865, the Bulgarian khan Boris was baptised, and the war that had begun against the Paulicians finally concluded with a Byzantine victory in 872. However, all of this—and even the liberation of the homeland—required payment, and the sum to be paid was considerable.

Until the mid-9th century, Byzantium had been regarded as the general centre of Christian culture. Although this recognition, between East and West—

They had actively fought against the people. However, among the Paulicians there were also many popes, priests, as well as professional soldiers and regular troops. Keeping this sect away from savagery was beyond the power of the spiritual leaders. In all these matters of murder, it is not worth accusing Marcion—who, as a philologist, categorically highlighted the fundamental differences between the Old and New Testaments—as much as in theological matters. Other concepts may also lie at the ideological foundation of anti-system movements.

* In other sources, Presian. (trans.)

It was not a matter of political domination over Christian states, but it had created the impression that they belonged to him and were obliged to come to the aid of other religions—namely Muslims—in times of danger. Admittedly, this obligation would not always be fulfilled, but it held significance for those in Southern Italy occupied by African Berber warriors engaged in the slave trade and plunder.

Even during the violent years of iconoclasm, the popes of Rome had meddled in the affairs of the Byzantine Church by supporting the defenders of icon veneration as much as they could. The *de facto* independence granted to the Roman See by the Carolingians at the expense of Constantinople had not prevented the survival of the super-ethnic union. The Greeks behaved as if they were at home in Rome and Paris, whilst the Franks did the same in Thessalonica [Thessaloniki] and Ephesus. Both there and here, the sole system of belief was Orthodoxy.

However, in 858, Photios, who did not recognise Pope Nicholas I, was elected Patriarch of Constantinople. The ensuing disputes were followed in 863 by Photios's excommunication, which was not well received in the East. In 867, the Council of Constantinople issued an anathema against the Pope, stating that he had interfered unlawfully in the affairs of the Eastern Churches. Thus, the schism between the churches came to pass.

We should not assume that the unyielding stances of Photios and Nicholas, or the filioque controversy, or the Pope's warning regarding his jurisdiction in Illyria and Sicily, were the causes of this schism. All these were minor issues that were swiftly resolved. The Macedonian usurper Basil I had deposed Photios; the headstrong Pope Nicholas I had died in 867. The theological dispute had been set aside and, over time, forgotten. Even the reconciliation between the Byzantine Church and the Papacy around the year 900 had changed nothing.

Essentially, the schism between the churches was not significant in itself; but this event had become a symbol of the West's separation from the Orthodox East, a period marked by an ethnogenesis explosion in the 9th century. The Franks and Latins were now regarded as foreigners by the Greeks. For they had embarked upon a new and original path of development. Over the course of this century, the ethnic groups emerging along the shores of the North Sea and the Bay of Biscay had discovered new patterns of social life, perception of nature and history

and had chosen them not because they were better than their predecessors, but simply because they were their own. The general inertia of Christian culture had considerably broadened the spiritual horizons of contemporaries who stubbornly refused to acknowledge this regrettable development.

Thus, Byzantium had transformed from an empire that administered Rome's legacy, albeit with certain shortcomings, into a small Anatolian kingdom where the Armenians, who divided the duties of state among their own people, had been made emperors. And whilst the Armenians had made a habit of heroically defending their religion and freedom against the Muslims, the Jews—who were friends of the latter—had become enemies of Byzantium.

We can now generalise our observation. The Jewish Khazars were friends with all imperial regimes: the Later Tang, the Carolingians, their German successors the Saxon Ottonians, and the Abbasids. In contrast, they were enemies of all the peoples of the Middle Ages: the Armenians, the Georgians, the Shiites (as they represented the interests of the conquered tribes), the Pechenegs, the Turfan Uighurs and the Slavs, that is, the Kievan Rus'.

This is no coincidence. Here, there is a mutual social convergence among despotic regimes that opposed the natural process of ethnic mosaic formation. And the conflict between these two principles had led to the era of antagonistic confrontation in the 8th–10th centuries.

A new partner had joined this game: the Varangians, recruited from the Scandinavian Vikings.

41. The Rahdânîs and the Normans of the ‘ ’

Although the Vikings were of Scandinavian or Baltic origin, they did not represent their own peoples. A passionate impulse had led to ethnic differentiation. Young people who left their homelands for Greenland or Normandy, the Green Isle of Erin or the blue shores of the Mediterranean, formed independent ethnic consortia that sometimes vanished but at other times achieved magnificent victories. Since these groups had spread across all of Europe, their encounter with the Jewish Khazars was inevitable. And the nature of this encounter would be determined by the historical context that made it possible. There are no sources illuminating this phase of history; consequently, to at least grasp the direction of events, we must once again examine the balance of power.

There are no sources illuminating this phase of history; consequently, we must once again examine the balance of power in order to grasp, at the very least, the direction in which events were unfolding.

The disintegration of the Abbasid Caliphate had not diminished the conquering power of Western Muslims, such as the Spanish Arabs and the North African Berbers. Let us recall: the Spanish Arabs had captured Grit and turned it into a base for their pirate activities in the Aegean Sea. In 842, the Tunisian Berbers operating in Sicily had sacked Messina, and in 878 they had captured Syracuse. In 902, whilst the Greeks were losing all their fronts in Sicily, in 904 the Arabs plundered Thessaloniki, the empire's second-largest city, and advanced as far as the mainland in Calabria. The Greeks were in a tight spot.

As previously noted, by the 9th century, following the *de facto* schism of the churches, Byzantium had become an eastern empire isolated by all its neighbours, who were first rivals and later enemies. Preoccupied on the one hand with constant warfare against Bulgaria, and on the other with unsuccessful attempts to hold on to Southern Italy against Arab incursions, Byzantium was not in a position to effectively prevent the strengthening of the Khazar rulers, which led to the loss of the Orthodox—which was barely holding on to the southern shores of Crimea, and in the North Caucasus and Dagestan.

Charlemagne's attempt to establish a pan-ethnic Christian German Empire in the West was not a futile endeavour, given the existence of a similar Greek Empire in the East. Yet the growing fanaticism of the 9th century had brought this colossal edifice crashing down like a house of cards. By 888, 'regional revolutions'³⁴ had taken place, meaning the 'ethnic groups'—or 'nations' as A. Thierry termed them—had emerged: the Bretons, Aquitanians, Provençals, French, Burgundians, Italians and Germans. Moreover, the latter was composed of sub-ethnic "tribes" such as the Saxons, Franconians, Bavarians, Suevi (Germans) and Thuringians. As they had squandered their strength fighting amongst themselves, they put up a very poor defence against the Arab and Norman attacks. They posed no threat whatsoever to the Khazars.

On the contrary, the Khazar Jews who arrived in Provence with vast sums of money were a threat to France. These merchants, the kings and the state

34 Thierry, A. *Collected Works*, M., 1937, p. 247.

They had bought the protection of the nobility, thereby securing shelter from the persecution of the clergy and the people. The conflict between the two sides had intensified. The Jews were the representatives of a culture older than that of the French. For this reason, they outmanoeuvred the Christians in debates concerning the Holy Scriptures. Their propaganda had been successful. In 847, a young German priest converted to Judaism, married a Jewish woman, and went to Spain, where he encouraged the Arabs to persecute the Christians. The Gallic bishops accused the Jews of buying Christian slaves and forcing them to perform Jewish rites; of stealing Christian children and selling them to Muslims; of aiding their enemies by harbouring hatred towards Muslims and the Normans; of opening the gates of besieged cities; and of “-children and selling them to Muslims, aiding Muslims and the Normans out of the hatred they harboured towards their enemies, opening the gates of besieged cities, and referring to ‘Christian flesh’ as pork—which infuriated the Christians to the point of fury.³⁵

It is difficult to say whether these complaints are true; but there is something else that matters to us: the hostility and strife between the locals and the Jews in the Rhône Valley were causing the French to fear the events triggered by the influx of Jews along the Volga. Provence could easily have been turned into a Khazaria. Moreover, the strength of the Berber volunteers filling the military ranks of neighbouring countries was no less than that of the Khorezmians. However, this required not only plenty of money but also time. Yet the Jews had no time. Why? We shall see this now.

From the year 800 onwards, the entire coastline of Western Europe had been subjected to raids by the Scandinavian Vikings. Moreover, the Normans, arriving by river, were infiltrating the interior of the mainland. Plunder was plentiful. However, it appears that the Vikings not only took gold, silver, cloth, linen, jewellery and valuable weapons, but also captured prisoners and sold them into slavery.³⁶ To whom? Certainly not to the prosperous Heuding peasants who had caused them to flee their homeland and take to the sea. To Iceland? There, too, slaves were escaping their masters or regaining their freedom because ‘owning slaves was not considered a virtue in Icelandic society’.³⁷ Therefore, taking the risk of capturing prisoners only made sense if there was the opportunity to sell them easily and at a good price.

35 Veber, *General History*, Vol. 5, pp. 487–488.

36 *History of Norway*. Moscow, 1980, p. 101.

37 Steblin-Kamenskiy, M.I. *The Culture of Iceland*. L., 1967, p. 19.

Here a second question arises: how were the Normans able to engage in military operations without conducting reconnaissance or intelligence work, having abandoned the sea, which served as a lifeline for them? They had advanced as far as the Rhine, Weser, Elbe, Seine, Loire and Garonne; they had plundered Cologne, Agen, Bonn, Trier, Borms, Tours, Orléans, Angers, Troyes, Châlons and Dijon. Let us not even count the cities of England.

The sheer number of these cities—too numerous to list individually—also indicates that the Vikings had acquired more booty than their shallow-draught ships could carry, and that they required vessels capable of navigating rivers. They had found such vessels in Denmark. These ships were not built for long voyages but were designed to navigate small rivers.³⁸ If this is the case, it means the Normans had buyers for the plundered goods, and it is likely that individuals who acted as guides and explorers for the Vikings in Germany and France had emerged. In other words, these people knew those countries; they were not natives of those lands; they were wealthy enough to capture captives whom they could later sell for substantial profits, and they possessed the capability to transport these Christian captives from the shores of the North Sea all the way to Spain, where the Caliphs of Córdoba purchased slaves for large sums of money. Could these have been the *Rahdânîs* we know of? Was such a thing possible?

Let us compare the facts. Between 768 and 772, Jews appear as major landowners in Narbonne. However, those working in the fields and pomegranate orchards were Christians living in the castles.³⁹ Indeed, some seventy years later, following the final unification of Western Europe by Charlemagne, we see this same picture in Lyon (849). It appears that in the wealthiest cities of the Holy Roman Empire, the Jews constituted the ruling class that dictated its own order. Indeed, in Lyon, at the Jews' request, the day on which the markets were held was changed from Saturday to Sunday, a move that the bishops—and in particular the famous Bishop Agobardus—vehemently protested.⁴⁰

In Spain, Jewish merchants were involved in the trafficking of Andalusian women between 864 and 874, and for this purpose undertook long journeys from Morocco to Egypt

38 Kogan, M. A. *The Great Voyages of the Medieval Normans*. L., 1967, p. 13.

39 Tumenyev, *The Jews*, p. 249 (Letter of Pope Stephen III).

40 Ibid., p. 276 (Agobardus, **De insolentia Judaeorum**, p. 5).

41 Ibid., pp. 268–269 and 271–272.

They have travelled far and wide.⁴¹ In Egypt, during the reign of Ahmad ibn Tulun, Spanish girls were in great demand and were constantly being purchased to fill the harems. It must be acknowledged that Christians opposed this situation wherever they could. Consequently, Jews dissatisfied with the administrative support provided by the Carolingian emperors began to make use of the 'infidel' Normans. At the beginning of the 9th century, ships had docked on the southern French coast. The local people mistook these for Jewish ships... and, naturally, they all fell victim to the Norman pirates.⁴² It is impossible to assume this was a mere coincidence. The local populace could have recognised the ships by their crests. It is likely that the Jews had lent their own ships to the Normans in exchange for a share of the booty. The name 'Jew' began to appear in England immediately following the Vikings' successes, that is, from the year 833 onwards.⁴³ In 848, the Normans plundered and burned Bordeaux thanks to the treachery of Jewish customs officials who were unafraid of the Vikings.⁴⁴ Such an event could only have been possible if there had been a tacit understanding between the two sides. The "Povesti vremennix let" (Chronicle of Bygone Years)* explains how this came about. The two raiding groups—the Radadids and the Vikings—had agreed among themselves on the division of the territories they would eventually conquer.⁴⁵ The Rus' Khaganate was also destined to fall victim to these predators. Indeed, for the entirety of the following century, Kyiv would serve as the arena for the bloody wars the Slavic-Rus' people were forced to endure. We shall discuss this later.

42 Ibid., p. 272.

43 Ibid., p. 143.

44 Weber, *General History*, Vol. 5, p. 489.

* "Povesti Vremennix let" (Kisâs-ı Vakâyi). Although this work, which is Nestor's famous chronicle, has been translated as "Başlangıç Vakayiname" in Prof. Dr. A. N. Kurat's book *History of Russia*, such a designation cannot be correct from a Turkish linguistic perspective. As this work is also known as the "Nestor Chronicle", and since the author uses the form given above, it has been deemed appropriate to translate it as "Kisâs-ı Vakaâyi". Henceforth, the term "Nestor Chronicle" will also be used as a synonym. (trans.)

45 "The Varangians from across the sea" were collecting tribute (or had set out to collect it) from the Chuds, Merya and Krivichs, whilst the Khazars were doing the same from the Polans, Severians and Vyatichs. (PVL. H. ç. p. 18).

The proposition put forward here may, at first glance, appear paradoxical. We are accustomed to viewing the Jews and the Normans as rivals. For indeed, they bear no resemblance to one another. However, conflicts dictated by elementary greed and sympathy—rooted in political and, above all, psychological factors—give way to reckonings, and even to the most vile immoralities. In such circumstances, sincerity is not only unnecessary but also unpleasant. Consequently, the Rahdânîs, having assured themselves that they would not become playthings in the hands of their capable partner, made use of the Vikings with ease. Moreover, when the Jews lost the game of monopolising world trade, the Normans, who attacked England, took the Jews with them⁴⁶, and from 1100 onwards, these Jews directed the credit operations of the English kings and their vassals.⁴⁷ Although this customary alliance was broken by Edward I in England and Philip Augustus in France, this phase of history falls outside the chronological scope of our subject.

42. In Search of the ‘ ’ in the Non-Contradictory Accounts

Whilst following the versions in the “Chronicle of Nestor”, we encounter accounts that lack certainty—or, to put it more mildly, ranging from the “invitation of the Varangians” to the stories concerning Olga’s claim to rights over the Drevlians—which are neither definitive nor agreed upon.

It seems the chronicler is presenting the well-known list of fabricated events. According to his account, the Khazars and the Varangians were certainly not allies, but bitter enemies. Since the information we have obtained suggests the opposite, I prefer not to believe the chronicler. Nestor, who wrote his work between 1100 and 1113, was a supporter of Grand Prince Svyatopolk II. He was also a friend of the German and Danish feudal lords, a bitter enemy of the Greek metropolitan and his patron Vladimir Monomakh, and an adversary of Prince Oleg Sya-toslavič of Chernigov, who put the last Khazar Jews to the sword. Furthermore, the events he recounts took place more than 200 years prior to his time. A contemporary historian, without conducting any special research or preparation, merely for the sake of pleasure, style and personal relationships—

⁴⁶ Tumenyev, Yevrei, p. 243.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 280.

Can one write the history of Catherine II's reign based on these sources? Even though sources are as plentiful as rubbish, this is still a difficult task. Yet Nestor, just like M.N. Pokrovsky, understood history as a 'policy directed towards the past' and defended the interests of his own monastery and the prince for whose sake he distorted the truth.

D.S. Lihacheff describes *Kısâs-ı Vakâyi* as a successful literary work in which historical information is sometimes presented as the author's own figment of the imagination—such as the invitation of the Varangians—and at other times contains distortions of the sort of absurdities one might only encounter in novels; whilst he evaluates A.A. Şahmatoff's analyses with meticulous scrutiny. This allows us to note that both works, if not in the details, at least in the approach essential and sufficient for our subject, utilise the same sequence and connections in identifying events related to ancient Russian history. Consequently, from this point onwards, we shall rely not on the accounts of the chronicles, but on the conclusions drawn after passing them through the sieve of historical criticism.

Having established the existence of an alliance between the Rahdânîs and the Vikings in Western Europe, we can now examine the situation in Eastern Europe from the same perspective. The similarities may seem paradoxical at first glance; however, we shall review the events and draw a conclusion.

The history of the Varangians' arrival and settlement in Slavic lands is shrouded in obscurity. This is why the details of these events were deliberately obscured by 12th-century chroniclers.⁴⁸ According to the generally accepted view, in 862 (incorrect chronology), the Varangian prince Rurik arrived in Novgorod and, after suppressing an anti-Varangian resistance led by a man named Vadim the Brave, imposed a tax on the Northern Slavs. However, he refrained from entering Russian territories.

In the 9th century, the Russian lands were referred to as 'South Podneprov⁴⁹', where as early as the 4th century, two peoples—the Ros-somon and the Slavs—had fought alongside the Huns against the Goths. The history of these two peoples up to the 9th century is unclear. The only thing known is that the Kievan Khaganate was a powerful and independent state, like the Hungarian, Bulgarian and Khazar khaganates. In 860, the Russians reached Constantinople (as recorded by Nestor in 866

⁴⁸ *History of the USSR*. Vol. I. Moscow, 1966, p. 482.

⁴⁹ Shahmataov, *Raziskanie*, p. 338.

is incorrect)⁵⁰, forcing the Byzantines to sign a favourable treaty and partially adopting Orthodoxy.

The Russians fought against the Bulgars in 864, the Polotskians in 865, the Pechenegs in 867 (?!-L.G.) and the Krivichians in 869. However, during this period of intense foreign policy activity, there was no conflict with the Khazars. Saint Cyril's mission to Khazaria in 860 took place in a peaceful atmosphere. This event demonstrates not the peace-loving nature of the Khazar administration, but the strength of Kyiv—the alliance formed by the Russians alongside the Magyars—and the complexity of the situation in Khazaria. Between 860 and 880, the Kyiv administration under Askold and Dir was powerful enough not to fear Khazar aggression. On the other hand, the Kyivans continued their expansion northwards without hesitating to engage in conflict with the Swedes.

Around 859, there were several kings ruling over Swedish territory: Björn Priholmni and his rivals, Emund and Olof. Emund's son, Erik, launched an expedition eastwards in 854 and subjugated the Curonians, Estonians and Finns. As these names suggest, he was concerned solely with the shores of the Baltic Sea. The Krivichs, the Merians (Cheremisses) and the Ves (Veps) lived at the Zaleski junction in Eastern Europe. Had any of the Swedish kings brought such vast territories under their rule, this would certainly have been mentioned in the sagas. Even St Ansgar, the Catholic missionary who was active in Sweden between 849 and 852 and who supported the continuation of relations with the Swedes until his death in 865, makes no mention of such a person.⁵¹

Even if the Swedes had wished to bring Eastern Europe under their control, they would not have been able to do so. Like all Scandinavians, they travelled by boat and could therefore only reach as far as the riverbanks extended. As they had no horses, they could not venture far from the shore. Transporting horses and their fodder in light boats was, moreover, impossible. Furthermore, any raid could only have been carried out in the autumn. This was because, at that time of year, the local population could not hide in the forests. For such attacks, the existence of roads and the presence of local guides were essential. In the 9th century, however, there were no roads in the forests; whilst paying for their services was a simple matter for the Swedes, there were also not enough traitors.

⁵⁰ *PL. T. 22*, p. 247.

⁵¹ Hennigues, *Unknown Lands*, II/165–173.

It must be acknowledged that the ancient Swedes' ambitions to establish a vast empire in the northern forests were largely thwarted by insurmountable obstacles linked to the physical geography. However, since the Scandinavians seized the lands of the Rus' and Slavs in the 9th century, there was likely an additional factor at play, which requires further investigation.

Although the Swedish kings and the Byzantine basileus were not concerned with eliminating the Khaganate of Kiev, there was a third neighbour who pursued such a goal and possessed the means to carry out his plan. This was, of course, the Khazar Khaganate, which had advanced as far as the Don River by 834. The fortress of Sarkel, established there, was intended to serve as a base for attacks to the west, yet for some reason, no activity in this regard occurred for half a century. The Khazar Jews had managed to incorporate only the Severians into their political-economic system. Indeed, the fact that Eastern coins reached as far as the banks of the Dnieper in the 9th century also demonstrates this.⁵²

In this situation, the 'chimera'—which lacked the ability to establish sincere relations with ethnic groups—utilised the 'rogue elements'—the Scandinavian Varangians—who occupied Kyiv in 882.

Let us recall that Rurik was a Varangian (a mercenary) belonging to the 'Russian' peoples (the Rossomans). Unable to get along with the people in his own country, he accepted an offer from 'Gostomysl' (or the 'Gostomysl' group) and came to settle in Novgorod. According to the earliest chronicles—the "Chronicle of Nestor"—he controlled a small, sparsely populated region: Ladoga, Beloozero and Izborsk. Polotsk and Smolensk belonged to the Rus'—that is, to Kyiv, where Rurik's enemies Askold and Dir were based—between the years 864 and 869. Rurik could only replenish the ranks of his army with people known as the Varangians, who came from across the sea. It was they who, for Rurik's son—whose name is mentioned in the Old Chronicle of Igor—captured Kiev.

Here a new uncertainty arises: the cunning invader, whilst killing only the city's two rulers, spared the masses of the people

52 Shevchenko, Yu. Yu. *At the Crossroads of Two Ethnic Substrata in Eastern Europe in the 8th–10th Centuries* // Ethnography of the Peoples of Eastern Europe. L., 1977, pp. 46–47; Gumilev, L. N. *Ancient Rus and its Neighbours in the System of Interethnic Trade and Natural Exchange* // Izv. VGO. Vol. 119, No. 3, 1987, pp. 223–234.

met with no resistance. The Varangians likely had very strong support, and the Slavic-Russians could not risk repeating the experience of Vadim the Brave, who had attempted to expel Rurik from Novgorod in 864.

A brief account by Mesudi fills this gap: "The Rus' and the Slavs formed the retinue of the Khazar khans."⁵³ We shall see shortly how this came about.

The change of power in Kiev brought about political changes as well. Oleg subjugated the Drevlians in 883, the Severians in 884, and the Radimichs in 885. Moreover, the latter had been paying tribute to the Khazars up until that point. It was inevitable that this would lead to war with the Khazars... and a 80-year gap appears in the chronicles! What harm is there in that!

Essentially, the Varangian rulers were not friends of the Slavic-Russians; initially they were allies, then enemies, and finally vassals of the Jewish Rahdanis. The Varangians, who prided themselves on their martial prowess, suffered constant defeats; yet it was the Slavic subjects sent on campaigns against the Khazars and to the Pontus (the Black Sea) who were lost. The Varangian commanders did not grieve for the Slavic warriors who perished.

Russian lands suffered greatly as a result of the constant failures of incompetent rulers. These were the very things that the cunning chronicler Nestor had concealed.⁵⁴

So, how did the Slavic-Russians come to find themselves in this shameful situation? If we cannot find the answer to this question in history, we must turn to ethnology.

Byzantium and Russia were contemporaries. In Byzantium, a period of decline had begun in the 8th century, whilst the phase of stagnation had made itself felt by the mid-9th century. It appears that the period of upheaval in Russia began later and continued until the end of the 9th century. During the period of upheaval, fragmentation occurs in the ethnic sphere. Thus, the Varangians' own followers – the 'Gostomils' or, 250 years later, Grand Prince

⁵³ Artamonov, *Khazars*, p. 383.

⁵⁴ There is a clear tendency among chroniclers to attribute the victories to Oleg, seeking to overshadow Askold and Dir. (Saxarov, A. N. *Diplomacy of Ancient Rus*, p. 78).

This is the reason why the first “Western supporters”, including Svyatopolk II and the chronicler Nestor, emerged. And naturally, since only Nestor’s accounts survived to reach later centuries, modern historians have accepted them as authoritative without any critical scrutiny.

However, as the Jewish community of Khazaria was a closed system—unable even to emulate the actions of the Bastards, who were Karaites (the offspring of Jews and Khazars)—it was bound, according to the laws of ethnic entropy, to degenerate and weaken. Yet this community actually grew stronger! There must be a scientific explanation for this.

It has been established that if individuals belonging to any population simplify their morphological structure, their biochemical energy (which is greater in animals), that is, the biogenic migration of their atoms—which increases their chances in the struggle for life—suddenly accelerates.⁵⁵

When we apply this rule to an organism at the population level, we see that during the breakdown and simplification of the organism, a free energy emerges that strives to expand its environment. Examples include the Han aggression of the 2nd–1st centuries BC, the 19th-century European nations’ conquest of other countries for colonial purposes, and the power struggles between the Jewish Khazars and Kievan Rus’ during the period under consideration. It was impossible to foresee the outcomes of these conflicts in the 9th century.

According to the ‘Chronicle of Nestor’, in 907 Oleg launched his most daring assault on Constantinople ‘by land and sea’. The Russian army, having supposedly besieged the Greeks with sudden attacks, slaughtered them and razed the suburbs of Constantinople to the ground. Oleg then placed his ships on wheels, unfurled the sails, and, aided by the wind, reached the city walls. Seized by fear, the Greeks paid a substantial amount of tribute and concluded a treaty to satisfy the Russians. At that point, Oleg hung his shield on the main gate of Constantinople.⁵⁶

Everything is described very beautifully in the chronicle, but the trouble is that the Greeks had no knowledge of such an expedition. They probably didn’t even notice it.

Eighteenth-century Russian historians accepted Nestor’s account without any criticism, and thus this story, with all its inconsistencies—

⁵⁵ Vernadsky, V. I. *Op. cit.*, § 207, p. 285.

⁵⁶ *PL. H. z. S. 25.*

Nevertheless, it found its way into secondary school textbooks. A.A. Shakhmatov, A.Y. Presnyakov, S.P. Obnorsky, S.V. Bahrušin, D.S. Likhachev and many others viewed this event with scepticism. The 907 treaty also bears a striking resemblance to the historically established 911 treaty.⁵⁷ However, the debate continues to this day. Although Nestor's account may be a product of imagination, the details are clear; however, the discussion concerns the legal aspect of the matter, namely the text of the treaty. A view has been put forward that the 907 treaty served as a preamble to the treaty signed in 911. On this matter, B.D. Grékoff, M.V. Levchenko and V.T. Pashuto reached a consensus that a third version preserves the universal meaning of the 907 treaty. G. Ostrogorsky and A.A. Vasiliev, however, having accepted Oleg as a Varangian commander, based their argument on the chronicle version. In this rather complex debate, the most reasonable proposal was made by A.N. Saharoff, who suggested dividing the issue into two parts: the reality of Oleg's expedition and the credibility of the treaty text.⁵⁸ The second aspect of the matter lies outside our scope of interest; however, the first can be regarded as the conclusion reached by the majority of the studies in question, a view with which the author of these lines also concurs. It appears that Nestor attributed Askold's expedition of 860—the credibility of which is unquestionably accepted—to Oleg.⁵⁹ So, what had happened at the beginning of the 10th century? Let us examine and consider.

According to the method we have adopted, the panorama must be viewed in conjunction with the history of the entire region associated with Khazaria between 907—or, more precisely, 904–910. In this way, a chronological framework will emerge that allows us to discard the majority of the unsubstantiated versions.

Let us pose the question as follows: Who was on the side of Byzantium, and who was against it? Byzantium was surrounded by three major ethnic groups: Muslims, Roman-Germans and Eurasian nomads. However, there was no uniformity among any of them. The Muslims were divided into Sunnis, who were hostile to Byzantium and purchased furs from Khazaria; the Deylamite Shiites, who were hostile to the Sunnis; and the Qarmatians, who were hostile to all of them and stood out as the most striking example of an anti-systemic force. In the West, the Carolingian emperors, who relied on the Jewish community that provided them with funds,

⁵⁷ For a discussion of this version, see Saxarov, A.N. *Diplomacy of Ancient Rus*, pp. 84–89.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 48–56.

Feudal revolts were breaking out against the emperors. The Carolingians could only maintain their rule by granting privileges to the Jews—and quite generous ones at that.

In the steppes, the Pechenegs had driven the Hungarians into Europe; they, in turn, had attacked Moravia, Italy and Germany.

Thus, Byzantium's enemies were the Sunni Arabs, the Roman popes, the Western emperors, and, of course, the Khazar Jews; its allies were the Dailamite Shiites, the French feudal lords (though they were of little use), and the Pechenegs, as recorded by Constantine Porphyrogenetos. The Russians, however, were left free to choose... and they made this choice in 904, a matter which will be discussed in detail.

43. The Russo-Greek War of 907

Did such a war actually take place? The chronicler does not hesitate to praise Oleg to the skies, claiming that he successfully besieged Constantinople and forced the Greeks to sign a humiliating trade agreement, earning him the title of 'Večši' from the Kievan Rus' and the epithet 'ruler of the pagans and the ignorant'.⁶⁰

The chronicler's attitude towards the prince is also hypocritical: on the one hand, he is deemed worthy of praise as a conqueror; on the other, he is lauded for being an ignorant pagan—which, according to the monk of the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra, is not a good thing. It is also unclear why they attribute to him the destruction of the Greeks. For the Greeks had not even noticed Oleg's exploits. Traces of indirect information regarding the events of 907 led V.D. Nikolayeff to an analysis of Pseudo-Symeon's *chronicle* (61st year, 10th century), and the surprises began there.

In 1904, the Arab sailor known as the 'Lion of Tripoli' attempted to attack Constantinople, but was driven off by the fleet of the Byzantine admiral Imerius. Around the same time, the Byzantines were defeated by another fleet commander, John Radin

60 S. M. Solovyeff also views Oleg's 'achievements' with scepticism. In his view, Oleg's troops contented themselves with plundering defenceless Slavic tribes.

61 Nikolayev, V. D. *The Testimony of the Pseudo-Simeon Chronicle Concerning the Rus-Dromitax and Oleg's Campaign Against Constantinople in 907*// Byzantine Chronicle. Vol.

42. Moscow, 1981, pp. 147-153.

had also repelled the attack by the Ross-Dromites.⁶² A portion of the Ross-Dromites were saved thanks to the supernatural powers of the Ross sorcerer, whilst the remainder were killed by being burned with Greek fire at the Trikefal Cape in the Opsiki theme.⁶³

The critical texts cited by V.D. Nikolayeff in his articles had sparked heated debates regarding the Pseudo-Symeon chronicle. Ultimately, those defending Nestor's version, which recounts Oleg the Great's victorious campaign, lost the debate. It is necessary to regard V.D. Nikolayeff's conclusion—which essentially adopts the following view—as the most surprising aspect: "... the 'Ross-Dromians' were likely not Oleg's army, but Slavic-Varangian volunteers living at the mouth of the Dnieper and along the Black Sea coast. This volunteer army... organised a raiding expedition into Byzantine territory under the leadership of the 'commander of the holy lake'." The fact that the Ross-Dromils' expedition coincided with that of the Lion of Tripoli is no coincidence. The Dromils took advantage of the imperial fleet's absence from the capital. Swimming in at night to avoid detection by the Khersonesian patrols, the Dromils advanced along the Bulgarian coast. For the Bulgarians hated the Greeks. They subsequently plundered the area around the capital, but were routed by the Byzantine fleet. And this event took place three years before Oleg's expedition, that is, in 904. Now: If even such a minor event found its place in Byzantine history, then naturally the 'shield hung on the gates of Tsargrad' would also have found its place in Nestor's conscience.

Two issues arise here; but the second is, in fact, the answer to the first. For one thing, Nestor could not have known that in 860 the Rus' were on the verge of conquering Constantinople with mercenaries in a manner very similar to what Oleg supposedly did in 907. Not every author possesses boundless powers of imagination. I suspect that here, the chronicles have simply altered the history of a campaign involving Askold, with the sole aim of ensuring that dear Oleg is sufficiently praised. After all, this chronicle was written two hundred years after Oleg's time (110–113), and one could not expect all readers of that era to be so closely concerned with the chronology of the past.

62 Drom (Greek) – a race. These bandits fled so swiftly from regular armies that they eventually came to be known by this nickname. (Ibid., p. 151)

63 A Byzantine military district during the reign of the Macedonian dynasty.

If this is the case, then the source critiques are correct in showing that what occurred was not a victory but a defeat, and that this took place not in 907 but in 904. The Byzantines recorded the events of their own history and did not remain silent. Bearing this ^{version} in mind, let us consider what consequences the defeat of the Lion of Tripoli and his allies must have entailed.

It is not difficult to imagine the fury that gripped the Ross-Dromians when they saw not only those who had escaped the Greek fire in 904, but also the deaths of their own kinsmen. The dream of settling scores with Constantinople had become an ethno-psychological obsession. It is not hard to imagine that, in such a period, a legend—one that never actually existed and seemed impossible—the story of settling scores with the Greeks, might have been conjured up. It likely originated as a national theme and may well have been used as an additional narrative in the writing of early chronicles.

However, there was also the reality of the situation. The prospect of taking revenge on the Greeks with the help of the Arabs had become impossible. It was necessary to seek another ally hostile to the Christians, which meant choosing between the Hungarians and the Khazars. The Hungarians, who had recently occupied the Danube valley, had turned their sights towards Western Europe—Germany, Italy, France, and even Spain. Consequently, no benefit could be derived from them. Whereas the Khazar Jews hated the Greeks with every fibre of their being. For the borders of their state extended as far as Crimea, and they had commercial interests in all the seas.

The Ross-Dromians,⁶⁵ former mercenary pagan warriors, and their allies in Kiev and Novgorod naturally hoped they could ally themselves with the Khazarian kingdom. They had decided to make use of its power, but it was they themselves who would be used.

Yes; making insincere friends can be dangerous; but once the journey had begun, the chain of events—as is often the case in ethnic history—would continue uninterrupted for half a century, until the momentum of that phase ran out and was replaced by a new one.

Even if there is another, more accurate traditional version, the exaggeration of Oleg's successes and the abundance of booty was certainly valid for the writers of that period; Oleg's campaign against the Greek autocracy

64 *Vizantiyskiy Vremennik*. Vol. 42, p. 152.

65 *Ibid.*, p. 150.

remains valid.

Such a conflict was in the interests of both partners, but at what cost? As we have seen, the 'Dromi', despite their courage and manoeuvrability, could not compete with a trained regular army. The Khazar mercenaries recruited from Gurgan and Tabaristan were resilient, but expensive. Moreover, they refused to fight against Muslims, whilst the Jews occasionally clashed with Islamic armies. But there was another army capable of warfare: the Slavic 'warriors' and their Finnogur neighbours. These could be mobilised with ease. It was not mere bandits but a regular army that could be deployed against the Greeks and the Deylemians.

It was common knowledge that the Slavs were warriors. "The peoples of the Russian lands... are warriors. They fought against all the infidels around them and emerged victorious. They called the ruler at their head the 'Russian Khan'. Among them was also a group from Moravia," writes the 9th-century Persian anonymous author.⁶⁶ The latter refers to professional warriors consisting of volunteers who had made soldiering their trade. It was the Rahdanians and Normans who decided to utilise this Slavic army by forcing the Slavic youths to pay their taxes with their blood.⁶⁷ The Slavs had no need for the campaigns organised against the Khazars and Pontus. Yet the Khazar ruler and the Prince of Kiev had found a way to send these people to their deaths for their own greed. Such is the hardship of living under foreign rule!

⁶⁶ Novoseltsev, *Eastern Sources*, p. 399.

⁶⁷ Froyanov, N.Ya. *Kievan Rus*. L., 1980, pp. 185–190. Hereafter: Froyanov, *Kievan Rus*.

VIII. THE KIMERAN OFFENSIVE (899– 944)

44. Entering the 9th–10th Centuries

The world around Khazaria had changed. These changes did not concern the Khazars, but the situation was beginning to deteriorate for the Rahdanian merchants. China, the main supplier of silk, had been reduced to ruins following the peasant uprisings of Huang Ch'ao and the suppression of the rebellion by the Sha-t'os, the last Hun Turks who had saved the Tang dynasty. The Chinese peasants harboured a particular animosity towards foreign merchants, and in 879, the foreign-owned colony of Huang-chou had been razed to the ground. The same thing had happened in Ch'ang-an in 881. That year, Jewish merchants in China were killed; their goods were plundered; the caravan route was left neglected; the caravanserais on the Huang-ho were abandoned to their fate; and over the course of half a century, nine major floods occurred.

It is hardly surprising that silk exports came to a halt; yet this had been the Rahdâni's main source of income.

In the West, the situation had become a tangled mess. The Carolingians, who supported the Jews, had lost the trust of their subjects. First, the French, who had elected Eudes de Paris as king, had rebelled; following the king's untimely death, the French feudal lords continued to wage war against the empire and, having secured the final victory, elected Hugues Capet as king in 987. Hard times had now begun for the Jews in France.

From the Jews' perspective, a more favourable environment had emerged in Germany. The Saxon kings, who had succeeded the Carolingians, had extended their protection to Jewish merchants and provided them with trading opportunities along a strip stretching from the Kingdom of Arles to the Palatinate of Toulouse in Spain.

Meanwhile, the Muslim caliphs in Spain needed slaves rather than silk and furs. They required young male and female slaves, but parents, naturally, were unwilling to give up their children.

Baghdad was going through a difficult period. The surrounding regions had been ravaged by rebellions led by black African slaves and Karmatian Bedouins. There, too, gulams had been purchased to bolster the ranks of the army. In 866, when power in Baghdad passed from the caliphs into the hands of the Turkish elite troops, the commanders had filled the entire army by purchasing gulams who were their fellow countrymen. The supply of slaves was a vital issue for the Rahdâni family, but this too depended on warfare. War, however, was a risky and costly business.

Of course, the Rahdânis could have been advised to change their profession and, for example, take up the trade in watermelons and sheep, but this would have required altering the inexorable law of progress. Their ancestors had not established that rigid expansionist system merely to see all their efforts, heroism, achievements, and the luxurious living conditions they had secured through a century of toil go to waste. That is why the rigid system is strong enough to ensure the best possible adaptation to even the worst conditions. It is difficult for systems to restructure themselves as the environment changes.

On the contrary, a fragmented system is flexible; yet it does not allow for the full coordination of forces to resolve foreign policy issues. Consequently, whilst rigid systems thrive under stable conditions, fragmented systems manage to survive even amidst constant changes in their living environment and ethnic context.

Jewish Khazaria is an example of a rigid system. The Eurasian ethnic groups surrounding Khazaria, however, are fragmented systems. In the 9th–10th centuries, changes in geographical conditions (resulting from cyclones shifting their path to the forested regions of northern Eurasia) could be either beneficial or detrimental to ethno-economic systems, but they could not be neutral. And since the interests of the Jews and the Khazars within the chimeric unity of the Khaganate were opposed to one another, these climatic changes would be reflected in the history of Eastern Europe and the Great Steppe.

45. Nature's Wrath

Until the steppes became damp and the marshes between the Volga and the Oka dried up, the Caspian Sea remained calm and tranquil. It maintained its absolute level of -36 metres, and thus the vast, fertile lands in the lower reaches of the Volga were settled by farmers. Towards the beginning of the 10th century, as the Volga ceased to be a tranquil river and turned into a raging flood that collected rainwater and irrigated the vast lands stretching from Valdai to the Urals, the water level of the Caspian Sea rose to -29 m.¹

For those living in the southern reaches of the Caspian Sea, this held little significance. There, the shores were steep and surrounded by mountains. The rising sea could only submerge the nearby fortresses—but they were already deserted. For the gently sloping northern shores, however, the rise in sea level meant a great deal. Fields, vineyards and pomegranate groves lay submerged beneath the waters of the Volga, which had risen as far as the embankments. As it was impossible to make use of the flooded land, people settled on the Baire hills to wait for the waters to recede. Instead, the water level rose even further, and so the people were forced to retreat back into the steppe.

However, there was no salvation for the Khazars who had come seeking refuge. The rainless steppe had turned into a semi-desert, and moreover, it was the final stretch of desert where even nomads could not survive. In the 10th century, the Karluk had left the shores of Lake Baikal to settle in the oases of Central Asia; the Pechenegs had migrated from the shores of the Aral Sea to the Black Sea coast; whilst the Guz had turned towards the Ural and Emba regions. Only the Kumans (Polovtsians), living in the western foothills of the Altai Mountains and the southern strip of Western Siberia, which were covered in pine forests at that time, had not suffered from the drought. They had been saved by the well-watered rivers encircling the Barabinsk steppe from the east and west.

Life was easier on the western fringes of the Great Steppe, along the banks of the Dnieper, Donets and Don. This was because the meridional currents in the atmosphere,

1 Gumilëv, L. N. *The Discovery of Khazaria*; also: *The Heterochrony of the Humidification of Eurasia in the Middle Ages* // Vestn. LGU. 1966. ! 18, pp. 81–90; also: *The Origins of the Rhythm of Nomadic Culture in Central Asia (An Attempt at a Historical-Geographical Synthesis)* // Peoples of Asia and Africa. 1966. ! 4, pp. 85–94.

2 Pribanov, L. N. *Changes in the southern boundary of the pine range in Kazakhstan* // Bulletin of Agricultural Sciences (Alma-Ata). 1965. No. 6, pp. 78–86.

They maintained the humidity levels in these regions at a normal level. Consequently, the Pechenegs who settled in the Podneprov region began to raise cattle and horses there once more, strengthened their military manpower, and thus succeeded in preserving their independence.

As the Eastern Bazkirs were by no means hospitable, the Khazars, who had turned towards the north-west, settled on the Lower Don terraces from the second half of the 9th century onwards, bringing with them saplings of the Terek cherry. The four sub-terraces of the Don extended harmoniously as far as the water junctions of the steppe. However, signs of zonation were already becoming apparent on the second terrace: coniferous forests, dense willow trees, and so on. This vegetation also shaped the living conditions of the Alans, Khazars and Kazakhs. The author of these lines had discovered a small village in the middle reaches of the Don in 1965, where ceramic fragments dating from the 10th to 12th centuries were found. These ceramic fragments demonstrated that the people living in the Don valleys possessed their own cultural heritage capable of resisting the influence of foreign ethnic elements.

It could be said that this branch of the Khazars was more fortunate than the others. They converted to Christianity through Cyril in 860; as a result, they became part of the Christian community and subsequently established relations with the Crimean Goths, Alans and Greeks. The others, however, continued to be crushed under the weight of the tax burden, which the Khazar administration, even if it had wished to, could never manage to reduce.

However, drought and water scarcity did not affect the Jews of the Caspian region. This was because they lived in cities, in luxurious wooden houses that remained warm in winter and cool in summer. They also purchased their food from the market. Caravanners arriving via the Itil paid the requested prices without objection; in this way, the Jews were able to compensate for the losses they had suffered in China and Provence. Consequently, natural events did not affect social relations within the Jewish communities, and they continued their activities within the Khazar society in which they were integrated. The weakening of the nomads due to famine only served the Jews' interests. Meat could be bought cheaply; but a weakened enemy was also considered harmless. Consequently, the activity of the Khazar administration increased rather than declining in the 10th century. Now, ruthless wars were bound to begin... and indeed, these wars would ravage the south and the west.

But not the north! The currents from Atlantic cyclones, which were diverted into the forested region, brought copious amounts of snow and rain in summer and autumn

and these had turned the open areas of the forests—that is, the places most suitable for primitive agriculture—into swamps. The economy of the peoples living between the Volga and Oka rivers had been disrupted, and consequently their ability to resist a foreign occupation had been weakened. Had the Khazar Jews been able to reach an agreement with the Normans regarding the partition of Eastern Europe in the mid-9th century, they would have taken control of virtually the entire region by the beginning of the 10th century. The Khazar confederation comprised the following peoples: the Burtas (Northern Volga), the Bulgars³ (Lower Kama), the Suvaz (the Chuvash of the Upper Volga)⁴, the Aris (Mordva Erziya), the Cheremis (the Mari beyond the Volga), the Vyatichi (along the Oka), the Severians (along the Desna) and the Slavs, who “united the other Slavic tribes under a single name”.⁵

Were the 9th–10th centuries a period of ascent to the zenith for the Khazar-Jewish power, and a time of catastrophe for the indigenous peoples of Eastern Europe, who had no choice but slavery or death?

46. Around the Caspian Sea

Trade routes were the lifeblood of the Jewish Khazaria; but the Caspian Sea was extremely turbulent. The branches of the Volga delta had receded at their mouths and were unsuitable for the passage of large ships. The eastern shores, meanwhile, had become parched and desolate. For this reason, the administration preferred to use the caravan routes circling the shores of the Caspian rather than a dedicated fleet.

The most suitable route was the one taken by merchants starting from Baghdad, crossing the Caucasus via Derbent, proceeding directly to Khazaria, and from there on to Bulgar and Great Perm. The second route led via Merv, Bukhara and Khwarezm [Harezm] to the banks of the Amu Darya, then through the Üstyurt plateau opening onto the Turkic lands, crossing the Emba, Yayık and Sakmar rivers, and subsequently reaching the left bank of the Volga and Bulgaria. The only drawback of this route was that it passed through the lands of the Guz, Pechenegs and Bashkirs. For the latter were regarded as ruthless head-hunters; as for the former, during Ibn Fadlan's journey, the caliph's envoys—

3 The son of the Bulgar elteber was being held hostage among the Khazars; ‘the Khazar khan had requested his daughter for his harem.’ (Kovalevskiy, *Kniga*, p. 141).

4 Kovalevskiy, *Kniga*, p. 139, note 599.

5 Artamonov, *Xazar*, p. 385.

They had intended to behead him, or strip him naked and send him back, or hand him over in exchange for their own men held captive by the Khazars; fortunately, they later allowed Ibn Fadlan to depart.⁶

Another route passing through the Muslim countries of Central Asia led directly to the Volga and the Itil via the lower reaches of the Lower Emba and the Yayık. Along this route, there were caravanserais built of hewn stone and wells, each situated 25 km apart (the distance a caravan would normally cover in a day), with stone-lined walls. However, despite all the advantages and facilities offered, the eastern route was longer and more arduous than the western Caucasian route. Consequently, it was only used when no other alternative was available.

Meanwhile, the sea was far from empty, and Russian ships could be seen transporting goods—which had been brought by camel to be sent to Baghdad—from the Itil to Gurgan. It is reasonable to assume that this route was also under the control of the Khazar Khaganate, which took a keen interest in ensuring that merchants could travel safely along this route and pay regular tribute into its coffers.

As long as the emirs set aside their obedience to the caliph and pocketed the collected taxes, even the chaos within the caliphate did not hinder these operations. In 866, the Turkish mercenaries who seized Baghdad deposed the caliph and installed another who suited their interests. This event marked the end of Arab rule in the state founded by their ancestors.⁷

These changes had also spread to the Caucasus. In 859, Ganja—where the Arab rulers of the Shayban tribes had retained control—was re-established; and in 869, the administration of Derbent passed into the hands of the Hashimite Arabs belonging to the Sulaym tribe. The rulers of these two cities, who were devout Sunnis, had not severed their ties with Baghdad or with the Sajidids, who held the governorship of Azerbaijan.⁸ Consequently, there was no reason for the Khazar khans to be unsettled.

However, the Iranian Shiites living on the southern shore of the Caspian Sea acted quite differently, and in 867 the mountain tribes of Tabaristan, rebelling under the banner of the Alevis, had broken away from the Caliphate.

⁶ Kovalevskiy, *Book*, p. 129.

⁷ Müller, *History of Islam*, Vol. II, p. 223.

⁸ Minorsky, *History of Shirvan*, p. 40.

Protected by the sea to the north and the Elburz mountain range to the south, the regions around the southern Caspian Sea served as a refuge for ancient peoples who had effectively maintained their independence during the Seleucid and even Sasanian periods. Just as the mountain peoples of Austria, the Basque Country and Cilicia hated the Arabs, the Muslim conquests had not brought about any change in the lives of the Elburz mountain peoples. However, by 842, the influence of Islam in the region had waned, and the essentially anti-Arab Shi'ite propaganda had found fertile ground in Daylam and Tabaristan. These mountain dwellers were going to battle not for the Alevites, but against the Abbasids. As the Caliphate of Baghdad weakened, the remnants of the Deylamites—who, unlike the Arabs and Persians, had not squandered their strength and who deeply resented the steppe Turks, the sole military force of the Sunni regime—became increasingly dangerous.

The city that sent mercenaries to the Khazar khan was Gorgan, the 'land of wolves' on the south-eastern coast of the Caspian Sea.⁹ The warrior inhabitants of these impoverished lands had more than earned the nickname 'wolves' and had hired out their swords to anyone willing to pay the price. Gurgan was officially under the jurisdiction of the Governorate of Khorasan, which was ruled by the descendants of the Persian aristocratic family of the Tahirids, who were strict Sunnis.

In 872, Hasan, commander of the Shi'ite rebels in Tabaristan, entered Gurgan, conquered the city, and subsequently seized the wealthy cities of Kazvin and Rey (Tehran). Naturally, the Khazar Jews were now deprived of the brave mercenaries who no longer came to the Itil and of the busy caravan route. Fighting the Shiites had become an unavoidable necessity for the Khazar Jews.

To fight the Muslims, infidel warriors—namely the Scandinavian Varangians—were required. The Khazar ruler had invited Helgu (Oleg)'s drujina by promising the Varangians a share of Eastern Europe and support for the elimination of the Rus' Khaganate and Askold.

Oleg captured Smolensk and Kiev in 882, and by 885 had brought the Severyans and Radimichs—who had until then paid tribute to the Khazars—under his rule, a move that would ultimately lead to his downfall.

9 Gurgan: Derived from the Persian word 'gürg' – meaning 'wolf'. It is the ancient Hirkan-ya, and its Arabic name is Jürjan.

47. False- e Allies

Neither the Varangians nor the Radanians intended to abide by the agreement on the division of the sphere of influence. The Varangians had failed to conquer the lands beyond the river valleys. Therefore, they compensated for their losses by seizing the wealthy city of Kiev. However, Kiev was in a precarious position. This was because the Jews, together with their allied steppe horsemen, had driven the Varangians out.

Even the Khazar Jews had not succeeded in completely conquering Kiev. The 'Cambridge Anonymus' lists the following peoples as enemies of the Khazar Jewish community: Asiya (Asians–Ossetians), Bâb el-Ebvâb (Derbent), Zibuh (Zihs–Circassians), Turks (Hungarians), Luz-niya (Ladojans, i.e. Oleg's Varangian *druzhinas*).¹⁰ They lost the war they waged against Jewish Khazaria within a short time, but managed to hold their ground in Kiev because the steppe region was protected by the Magyars. However, shortly afterwards, the Magyars would find themselves in a difficult situation. This was because the Jews would incite the Tverians and Ulichs, Slavic tribes, to rise up against both them and the Varangians. In 11895, the Bulgars and Pechenegs attacked the Magyars, slaughtering their women and children, whereupon the Magyars abandoned Lebedya and crossed into Pannonia. The Pechenegs then occupied the lands they had vacated.¹² The Byzantines were unable to take part in this war. This was because the Byzantine forces were engaged with the armies of the Bulgarian khan Symeon, who was marching from victory to victory across the Balkan Peninsula. Faced with this situation, the isolated Kievan Principality became a vassal of the Khazar Jews, who used the Russians and Slavs in wars against Christians, the Shiites in wars against Muslims, and dealt with the pagans through the hands of Muslim Sunni mercenaries. Around the year 900, the Rahdani merchants' organisation seized control of Eastern Europe. But not before then.¹³

The silence of the historian Nestor indicates that Oleg did not achieve any victories in the following years, and that the Russian fleet was still active in the Caspian Sea against the enemies of the Caspian ruler as early as the beginning of the 10th century.

¹⁰ Kokovtsov, *Yevreysko*, p. 123.

¹¹ *PM.* H. 4, p. 21.

¹² Grousset, R. *L'empire des Steppes*. Paris, 1960, p. 238. Hereafter: Grousset, *L'Empire*.

¹³ Gumilëv, *Skazaniye*, op. cit., pp. 171–173.

It is stated. It is likely that the Kiev Varangians began to pay their tribute to the Khazar khan 'with their lives' and sent the Slavic-Russians, who were under their command, to die on the trade routes of the Rahdanians.

The situation in Central Asia, which had been favourable to the Khazar rulers, became complicated when sovereignty, the cities, and the cultured Samanids—the patrons of international trade—came into their hands.

In 900, Ismail Samanid had overthrown the Shi'ite state of the Alevis in the southern Caspian region. However, as the indigenous peoples of Gilan, Deylam and Mazanderan—who had never bowed to foreign rule—had retreated to their mountain fortresses to lie in wait, Samanid rule in Tabaristan had lost its significance. At that time, since 'neither the Samanids nor the Khazars possessed fleets', the Deylemians, whose territory was bounded by the Elburz Mountains to the south and the Caspian Sea to the north, had managed to hold their ground.¹⁴ However, in 909, Russian ships, which had plundered the Abeskun Islands, began to roam the seas. The following year, the Russians attacked Mazanderan, but were forced to retreat after suffering a defeat. In 913, a very large fleet—500 ships—advanced into the Caspian Sea with the permission of the Khazar ruler Benjamin, plundering the coasts of Gilan, Tabaristan and Shirvan. It is natural to assume that the Russians were invited solely by King Benjamin to deal with the mountain bandits. The Russians waged a brutal war against the Gilanis and the Deylemians, but they also attacked Shirvan and Baku, which were under the rule of the Sunni Sajidis—appointed by the Caliph and thus allies of the Khazars. However, encouraged by the Scandinavian commanders, they committed considerable atrocities in these regions.

Returning to the Itil with a great deal of booty, the Russians withdrew to rest after sending the Khazar king his share. At that time, the Muslims who made up the Khazar king's personal guard asked him to allow them to take revenge on the Russians for the Muslims who had been killed and the women and children who had been taken captive. The ruler granted the requested permission, and thus the three-day battle of revenge ended in the Russians' defeat. The death toll was 30,000. No prisoners were taken. The surviving Russians fled northwards towards the Volga, but there too they encountered the Burtas and

14 Mesudî; based on Minorsky, *History of Shirvan*, pp. 198–201.

15 They were referred to as "Acem", meaning "non-Muslims". See Minorsky, *History of Shirvan*, p. 199.

They were put to the sword by the Bulgars. It is clear that a misguided venture by the Varangians led to retaliation by the Khazar Muslims; moreover, the rout of Deylam's enemies had eased the situation for the Shiites. For the Shiites had broken free from Samanid rule in 913 and driven them out of Gilan and Tabaristan.¹⁶

The Deylamites concluded the entire first half of the 10th century with victories. One group turned southwards, conquering Fars, Kerman, Khuzistan and, finally, in 945, Baghdad, which they had kept the caliphs under pressure for 110 years. Another group, having brought Azerbaijan under their control in 914, advanced as far as Derbent.¹⁷ Khazar trade had fallen under the control of those who were not friends of Khazaria—or, more accurately, the enemies of the Khazar merchants.

The loss was great, but it could be offset. For the Eastern Khazar caravan route remained open. In 913, the Khazars, in alliance with the Guz, had slaughtered the Eastern Pechenegs, who lived as nomads between the Volga and the Ural.¹⁸ They had partially compensated for these losses through their allies, the Sâcîdîs, whom they had gained beyond the Caucasus; however, the dominance of the powerful and headstrong Deylemîs in Iran and Azerbaijan was making life a living hell for the Jews.

Worst of all, it was impossible to send reliable Sunni mercenaries from Gurgan against them. For the Commander of the Faithful had issued a fatwa, via the Deylamite emirs, ordering the Deylamites to be slaughtered by the Muslim sword; yet they had failed to carry out this order. Consequently, in order to protect the commercial interests of the Jewish community, the Russians had to be sent to the front once again; however, following the betrayal of 913, the Russians were now reluctant to launch a new campaign against the Khazars.

Although some of them had already converted to Christianity in the 8th century, the Khazars themselves could, of course, have been sent to the front; but the authorities had not taken such a decision and had to give the matter some thought—and they were not wrong to do so. For since this trade did not put a single coin in the Khazars' pockets, they would not have thrown themselves into the fray for nothing. And this situation would lead to events unfolding in a different manner.

¹⁶ Petruşevskiy, *Islam in Iran*, p. 249.

¹⁷ Minorsky, *History of Shirvan*, p. 194.

¹⁸ Grousset, *L'Empire*, p. 238.

48. The Enemies of the Revived Khazaria

It is well known that war is always a difficult and unpleasant affair; but there are things even worse than that: being enslaved, having one's sacred values trampled underfoot, having one's property confiscated, and being subjected to humiliating insults.

All of this had become the lot of the peoples of Eastern Europe once they had come under the sphere of influence of the Jewish Khazars. However, the ethnic differences between them made it impossible for them to unite. For this reason, the Volga Khazar administration easily pitted these peoples against one another by enlisting the help of the elders, who had not forgotten the feuds between the tribes. As early as the 9th century, King Benjamin had fought against the Asians (Ossetians), the 'Turks' (Magyars), the 'Painils' (Pechenegs) and the 'Macedonians' (Byzantines); with the help of the Alans, he had secured victory against the enemy coalition. Later, King Aaron,

In the early 10th century, he had defeated the Alans, this time with the help of the Turks (the Guz). M. I. Artamonov, who dates this event to 932, links the persecution launched against Christianity to the same incident and notes that Melik Aaron forced the Alans to apostatise.

In 922, Almuş, the khan of the Kama Bulgars, had embraced Islam and, taking into account the assistance of the Caliph of Baghdad—who was obliged to prohibit Muslim mercenaries from fighting against their fellow believers—had separated his state from Khazaria. He had also requested financial assistance from the Caliph to build fortresses against “Jews acting against him”.

The Caliph ordered that the property of the executed vizier be sold and the proceeds sent via the envoy Ibn Fadlan; however, the person who purchased the said property was unable to get the money to the envoy in time.¹⁹ Consequently, not only was the fortress in the city of Bulgar never completed, but by the 10th century, the Khwarezmian [Harezm] people were no longer heeding the commands of the weak Caliphs of Baghdad, who represented worldly affairs rather than spiritual matters.

The change of religion had weakened Great Bulgar rather than strengthening it. Of the three Bolgar tribes, the Suvaz (ancestors of the Chuvash) abandoned the adoption of Islam and retreated to the forests beyond the Volga. The fragmented Bolgar state could not cope with the Jewish Khazars.²⁰

¹⁹ Kovalevskiy, *Kniga*, p. 133.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 139.

The same was true of the Guz people. In 921, one of the Guz chieftains had converted to Islam; however, his kinsmen had demanded that he either renounce the new faith or relinquish power.²¹ The Guz people had returned to their old gods.

Thus, the attempt to rid themselves of the Jews with the help of the Muslims had ended in failure. The Rus and Slavs, who had been reduced to a dire state by the invading Varangians – a situation that the chronicler Nestor persistently sought to conceal – had learnt the necessary lesson from this. Unfortunately, we have no means of filling in the gaps in our knowledge regarding them.

The Khazars, who used the Arab dirham, did not have their own currency. A certain quantity of these coins had, of course, remained in the hands of the Khazar ruler's subjects. Between 883 and 900, the circulation area of the Kufic-inscribed coins extended as far as the eastern borders of the Rus territories. In other words, the Severians, who were within the sphere of Khazar influence, were using these coins.²² After 900, these dirhams were also found in graves on Russian territory, which indicates that the Russians had entered the Khazar economic system. As victories are always reflected in chronicles, we can say that these dirhams were not spoils of war. These dirhams were the price paid for the blood shed by the Slavic-Russians in the service of foreign interests in 909–910, for the fall of the Drevlyans in 914, for the war with the Pechenegs in 920, for the treachery of Melik Benyamin in 913—a debt that was never repaid—and for many other events that contemporaries failed to notice, and which their descendants have since forgotten. There is no reason to praise Oleg the Prophet.

As is self-evident, the Varangian administration could not maintain a foothold amongst the Slavic population of the Podneprov region. This point, which escaped Solovyeff's notice due to a lack of information, has now entered the realm of scholarly interest. Solovyeff views Oleg not as a heroic warrior, but as a cunning politician and a man who collected taxes from the defenceless Slavs.²³ Indeed, that was the case.

21 Ibid., p. 127.

22 Shirinsky, S. S. *Objective Regularities and the Subjective Factor in the Formation of the Old Russian State // Leninist Ideas in the Study of Primitive Society, Slavery and Feudalism*. Moscow, 1970, pp. 203–206.

23 Solovyev, S. M. *History of Russia from the Earliest Times*.

If we are to believe the chronicles, which make no mention of any national historical events between 920 and 941, we must accept that the Russians were a people of bourgeoisie and cowards, devoid of the capacity to avenge those who had died for their homeland and lacking the will to resist the tax collectors who transported the plundered goods to the Itil. However, we must rely not on these chronicles, but on social reports indicating that the Khazar Jews were forced to spend all their time suppressing popular uprisings and that Russian resistance was by no means insignificant. Furthermore, the international situation had changed; this shift significantly affected not only the fate of the Khazars, but also that of their neighbours and the Jews. Of course, this change has, where appropriate, fulfilled its function in relation to Khazaria's foreign policy.

Small groups and Muslim sultans posed no threat to the Khazar Jews; but the Jews were forced to contend with the rapidly growing power of the Byzantine Empire, which had come to be ruled by the Macedonian dynasty. All Orthodox Christians were potential allies of Byzantium, and their numbers were steadily increasing thanks to the efforts of Cyril and Methodius. The first baptismal movement in Russia had taken place in 867.²⁴ Furthermore, I do not believe it is wrong to argue that the Varangian conquest halted the Christianisation of Russia. So, who benefited from this? Only the Khazar Jews!

The Greeks could hardly have been pleased with this situation. Moreover, Khazar trade sustained Baghdad; Khazar diplomacy, too, was inciting the Bulgars against Constantinople. On the other hand, the Byzantine Jews would not have sided with a country that did not like them and even caused them distress. This is why 'the Jews were flocking to him (the Khazar king) from Islamic lands and the Byzantine Empire.' According to Mesudi, "the reason for this is that the emperor currently in power (in 943), named Armanus (Romanos), was attempting to forcibly convert the Jews in his country to Christianity and did not like them. The majority of the Jews fled from the Byzantine Empire to the Khazar realm."²⁵

It is entirely clear that relations between Christians and Jews had become severely strained and... blood would be shed.

²⁴ *History of Byzantium*. II/229.

²⁵ Quoted from Minorsky, *History of Shirvan*, p. 193.

49. The Bravery of Commander Pesah ()

It was impossible for the Byzantine-Khazar war, triggered by the Armenian-Jewish conflict,²⁶ to go unnoticed in Russia.²⁷ Kyiv was compelled to harbour the hope of freeing itself from the burdensome alliance with Khazaria by allying with distant Byzantium. For this reason, agents of Romanos Lekapenos were encouraging the Prince of Kiev to join the Byzantine-Khazar war that began in ⁹³⁹.

The war was instigated by Joseph, King of the Khazars, who ‘slaughtered many uncircumcised’, that is, killed many Christians. Unfortunately, the source remains silent as to where these executions took place. However, it appears that Christians living in Khazaria—where there is not even a hint of a military campaign—were affected by these executions. These executions were likely a reprisal for the persecution of Jews in Byzantium. Nevertheless, it is impossible not to note that the Hazar Christians also played a part in the Byzantine emperor’s decision to act in this manner.

The Russians then entered the fray. Although, according to the ‘Chronicle of Nestor’, Igor the Elder was in power at that time, the sources identify Helgu (i.e. Oleg) as the commander of these Russians. If Helgu is a proper name, then he was the namesake of Oleg the Prophet. However, this is more likely the title of a Scandinavian commander, meaning that Igor himself is being referred to. For Helgu is referred to as the “Tsar of Russia”.³⁰

In 939 (or early 940), Helgu captured S-m-k-ray (Samkerts on the coast of the Kerch Strait) in a sudden night raid. “For the commander, who was a slave of Hoşmonay, was not there.” It seems the Russian attack came as a surprise to the Khazar ruler.

26 Vasileios was an Armenian who had migrated from Macedonia. The Macedonian dynasty period was a time when the Armenians had taken control of the palace and state offices.

27 At that time, Russia, in the strict sense of the word, consisted of Kiev, Chernigov and Pereyasavl.

28 The Cambridge Anonymus provides detailed information about this war, citing a 12th-century Jewish author. Despite some vague details, the accuracy of the events is confirmed by historical analysis. (See Gumilev, *Skazaniye*, p. 168).

29 Kokovtsov, *Yevreysko*, p. 117.

30 *PL. H. 22*, p. 254.

Around the same time, another Russian force under the command of Voivode Sveneld subjugated the Ulich tribe, who lived along the lower reaches of the Dniester and Bug rivers. The Ulich had fought against the Prince of Kiev as early as 885³¹ and had, naturally, allied themselves with the Khazars. At that time, they had maintained their independence from Kyiv. Finally, after a three-year siege ending in 940, the Russian army captured the Ulič fortress—the city of Pereșechen—and imposed a tribute to be paid to Voivode Sveneld.

It is clear from this that, as the war had been planned in advance and its objectives established, it had taken place across a wide area. It certainly did not resemble a chance border skirmish or a routine raiding expedition by Varangian *druzhinas*.

The Khazar ruler responded to the attack with a counter-attack. Commander-in-Chief 'Mighty Pesah', having rescued Samkerts and driven the Russians from the shores of the Sea of Azov, also entered Crimea and captured three cities, 'slaughtering their men and women'. However, he was halted by the walls of Chersones, which saved the surviving Christian inhabitants of Crimea.

Pesah then went to Helgu, that is, he entered Kiev. Having laid the country to waste, he forced Helgu—against his will—to wage war against his former ally, Byzantium, with the aim of furthering the commercial interests of the Jewish community of the Volga.

In the Russian chronicles, apart from the subsequent campaign against Byzantium, all these events are glossed over in silence. The reason is well known: the humiliation of having to record one's country's defeat. Yet a host of new documents confirm this defeat.

Around the year 940, the left bank of the Dnieper broke away from the Principality of Kiev. (It would later be necessary to bring the Severians and Radimichs back under control).³² The Rus' handed over their finest weapons—their swords³³—to the conquerors and likely paid a tax collected from the coastal tribes, namely the Drevlians. (See further on.) The territories of the Ulichs and Tverians—the lower reaches of the Dniester and Danube—were also

31 Shahmatov, *Raziskania*, pp. 102–103.

32 Zaytsyev, A. K. *The Chernigov Principality* // Old Russian Principalities in the 10th–13th Centuries. Moscow, 1975, pp. 67–68. Hereafter: Zaytsyev, *The Chernigov Principality*.

33 Gumilev, *The Tale*, p. 170.

It fell into the hands of the Pechenegs.³⁴ The Krivichs gained their independence and established their own autonomous Principality of Polotsk. The remnants of the Varangian Rus', who had been unequal allies of the Khazar Khaganate, became vassals forced to pay the Rus' tribute with the blood of their warriors.

The Russians had absolutely no reason to go to war with the Greeks. As Nestor could find no suitable motive for this war, he had to content himself with bare facts. The Jewish anonymous author, however, had laid bare the causes of the tragedy in question. Without any pretension, he speaks of the pressure exerted by the 'Mighty Pesah' on the Russian prince Helgu (the Greeks did not even know the name Igor), who had been 'fighting against Constantine at sea' for four months. 'Helgu's warriors met their end by being burned by Greek fire before Constantinople. Helgu managed to escape, but, too ashamed to return to his country, he travelled by sea to Persia and there, together with his retinue, bid farewell to this world. Following this, the Russians came under the rule of the Khazars.'³⁵

The horrific consequences of this war, which took place in 941, are recounted in the *Chronicle of Nestor*, even though the chronicler chose not to go into great detail about the events. Four thousand ships laid siege to the northern shores of Asia Minor and carried out a landing, displaying a level of savagery that was unprecedented even for that time. Crucifixions, showers of arrows, driving nails into heads, and the burning of churches and monasteries—despite the fact that many Russians had only converted to Christianity in 867—and so on.³⁶ All this demonstrates that this war possessed a character entirely distinct from other wars of the 10th century. It appears that the Russian troops were led not only by Scandinavians, but also by capable and effective commanders.

The Greeks rallied, repelled the landing, and set the Russian ships ablaze with Greek fire. Some of the Russians were burned to death, others drowned. The Jews, however, had escaped both their enemies.

According to the "Kisâs-ı Vakâyî", a new campaign was launched against Byzantium in 944. A.A. Shahmatoff notes that this was a fabricated campaign

³⁴ Berlin, *Istoricheskie Sudby*, p. 120.

³⁵ Kokovtsov, *Yevreysko*, p. 20.

³⁶ PL. H. 2, pp. 33, 230.

but he does not appear to be correct.³⁷ For in 943–944, the Khazar Jews sent the surviving Russian warriors to Arran (Azerbaijan), where the Daylamite Shiites had settled.

The Russians launched an amphibious assault, slaughtering the army of Marzuban ibn Muhammad, the ruler of Arran, and capturing the town of Berdaa on the banks of the Kura. Marzuban laid siege to the fortress, and during the ensuing clashes, both sides suffered heavy losses. In fact, the outbreak of dysentery proved more dangerous than the Deylemite arrows and swords, and had spread to the Russian camp. When the Russian commander was killed in one of the subsequent engagements, the Russians withdrew to the coast and set sail once more towards Khazaria.³⁸

However, it is unclear where they went afterwards. None of them returned to Russia. For if they had, the chronicler could not have overlooked such an important expedition. Indeed, whilst the defeat suffered did not bring disgrace upon the Russians, it had tarnished the Russian fleet's reputation following its defeat in Asia Minor.

Could it be that all the Russian ships sank in the Caspian Sea? The route from the source of the Kura to the Volga delta is by no means a short distance. Moreover, given that the sea was stormy... anything is possible. Perhaps they were sailing close to the shore rather than out at sea. Even if it had been a mass disaster, surely a few people would have survived and managed to reach the shore safely. In the 10th century, Russia's relations with Derbent had not been severed. So, if there were any survivors, they too would have been sold into the slave market. But even if that were the case, they could have sent word back to their homeland. No, the assumption that 20,000 experienced sailors perished en masse in a single shipwreck is so implausible that it can be dismissed.

Let us recall that a law was in force in Khazaria sentencing soldiers who failed to achieve victory to death. The Russians were

37 See "Povest vremennix let" and its sources, p. 72. D. S. Likhachev objects to this view on the basis of the 945 treaty signed in Russia's interests. However, according to his definitive findings, Igor was killed in the spring of 944 (See PVL, Book 22, pp. 288, 295) and, consequently, the treaty was signed during Olga's reign following tough diplomatic negotiations.

38 For an assessment of the hypothesis regarding the Russians' campaigns in Khazaria, see Artamonov, *Khazaria*, pp. 374–380. For a critique of this hypothesis, see Gumilev, *Skazanie*.

39 Artamonov, M.I. *Voyevoda Svezeld // Culture of Ancient Rus*, Moscow, 1966, p. 33; Froyanov, I.Ya. *Kievan Rus*, p. 189.

They were sentenced to this punishment. Since the situation in 913 was similar and the outcome is well known, there is no need to rack one's brains looking for other reasons for the disappearance of an allied army. Here, the matter was even simpler. It was very easy to put sick and infirm people to the sword, and moreover, the task was completed without a sound.

It is surprising that the old and modern bourgeoisie are incapable of exhibiting any behaviour other than their own characteristic, habitual patterns, and that every encounter with other super-ethnic groups proves costly to them. Just as the lives of the Slavic 'warriors' held no meaning in the eyes of the Varangian commanders, so too does the ability of a foreigner hold no value for the bourgeoisie. The war tragedy in Khazaria had drawn to a close without a sound.

At the same time as the Khazar tragedy, a second tragedy unfolded in the Black Sea. In 944, Igor the Elder, seemingly having learnt nothing from the Byzantine fire, dispatched a large land army—comprising Varangians, Russians, nomadic Slavs and the Pechenegs who had joined them—along with a fleet, against Byzantium. Had this been regarded as an attempt at revenge, a nationwide organisation would have been put in place. Indeed, the wooden ships proved no match for the Byzantine vessels equipped with Greek fire on the open sea; the Slavic infantry units had entered the battle without logistical support. Nor could the Pechenegs' allegiance be trusted. Such an operation could only have been decided upon under pressure from the Khazars. Fortunately, everything ended happily.

The magnificent campaign amounted to nothing more than a military display. The Greeks offered a reasonable peace treaty, which was signed at the end of 944.⁴⁰ Thus, Igor led his army, composed of various tribes, back to his homeland. However, another point is of historical significance here. The army's movement from Ki-yef to the Danube could only have taken place in autumn, when the enemy could make use of their cultivated fields. Autumn generally begins in September.⁴¹ and, as is well known, Igor was busy collecting taxes from the Drevlians at this time. It follows, then, that the campaign was not led by Igor himself, but by one of his voivodes, and most likely by Sveneld, whose troops had gathered a large amount of booty from Bulgaria. Igor's warriors, however, were making up for their mistakes by plundering the Drevlians—

40 *PL. H. 22*, p. 289.

41 *Ibid.*, p. 295.

They decide to settle the matter by force.⁴² The tragic outcome of this conflict is well known.

The ally of the Judeo-Khazar merchant state was the Caliphate of Baghdad. The rulers of Itil had become wealthy through the slave trade they conducted with Baghdad and Córdoba, two of the world's major centres. The enemy of the same state, however, were the Dailamite Buyids, who had occupied Western Iran. The Buyid army had laid siege to the walls of Baghdad and, a year later, in 945, had captured the city.

Although the role of Baghdad's Muslim rulers in the holy war [jihad] against the Greeks was no more significant than that of the Hamdanid dynasty—that is, the emirs of Mosul—and their title of caliph was no higher than that of Abd al-Rahman III, the Emir of Al-Andalus, Byzantium must have been pleased to see the weakening of this age-old rival. The ships of the Andalusian corsairs controlled the entire Mediterranean, all the way to Grit, which served as a base for the fleets of the Arab-Berber pirates. Consequently, the Byzantines, lacking the strength to fight on both fronts simultaneously, had hastily signed a peace treaty.

For the Judeo-Khazar king, it made no difference which Muslim ruler held the title of caliph, as both purchased furs, honey and slaves from him. However, King Joseph, who by 944 had seized a vast region stretching from the Dnieper to the Upper Volga, could not be threatened by his warrior subjects. For this reason, he delegated the task of collecting taxes and ensuring the security of trade routes to Prince Igor, dispatching the Rus druzhinas on campaigns. The decline in the Rus population had weakened the Prince of Kiev and reduced him to the status of a docile vassal collecting taxes from the Slavs on the right bank of the Dnieper. Igor needed a druzhina to carry out this task and had deemed it appropriate to fill it with Slavs. This situation had turned the course of events in a direction so unexpected that even King Joseph could not have foreseen it.

Let us now try to calculate the cost to Russia of allying with King Joseph. In 913, he had 500 ships in the Caspian Sea, each carrying a hundred warriors. According to Mesudi, this amounted to a total of 50,000 warriors.⁴³ Not a single one of them returned.

42 Druzina said to Igor: 'Sveneld's troops have amassed booty by force of arms, whilst we stand idly by' (PVL . H. 2, p. 39).

43 Barthold, *Collected Works*, Vol. II, Part I. M., 1963, p. 829.

V.V. Mavrodin treats this figure with scepticism.⁴⁴ According to the chronicle's data, there were a total of 40,000 people on the Russian ships, and of these, at most 20,000 were Russians.⁴⁵ That is, as many as there were in 943. However, if one takes into account the heavy losses suffered by the Russians in the Black Sea two years earlier, it becomes clear that they had more troops in 913 than in 943. Consequently, Mesudi's account is to be preferred. The number of Russian soldiers was likely between 35,000 and 50,000.⁴⁶

If that is the case, then A.A. Shakhmatov's doubt as to whether Nestor's account of the second Igor campaign against Byzantium coincides with the chronology of the Arran disaster; the weakening of the Kievan Rus' and the fact that Igor died in the lands of the Drevlyans—which had only been seized through treachery during Oleg's reign and had effectively achieved independence—as well as the establishment of a Jewish quarter in Kiev, will all be clarified. This last point is a matter of such importance that it requires proof.

The letter sent by the Andalusian vizier Hasday ibn Shafrut to the Khazar King Joseph had reached its destination between approximately 954 and 961 via the following route: to 'the Israelites living in the land of the Tungr (Hungarians)', from there to Russia, and from there to Bulgaria.⁴⁷ After passing through Bulgaria, the letter reached its intended destination directly. It appears that Jews were living not only in the Tisza and Kama regions but also in the vicinity of the Dnieper. This was a gift from the Varangian kings to the Kievan Rus', who had welcomed them.

Ultimately, the Russians suffered two heavy defeats within three years as the price of their alliance with King Joseph, and lost many brave warriors. Even in their moments of victory, this triumph brought them no gain. For it was neither possible nor even necessary to establish a foothold in Asia Minor or beyond the Caucasus. Both wars had been waged, exceptionally, in the interests of the Volga merchant community. It appears that the Slavic-Russians were also destined to suffer the same bitter fate as the Turkic-Khazars.

44 Mavrodin, V. V. *Essays on the History of Feudal Russia*. L., 1949, p. 47.
Hereafter: Mavrodin, *Essays*.

45 Artamonov, *Khazars*, p. 371.

46 Rybakov, B. A. *Military Affairs // History of the Culture of Ancient Russia*. Moscow, Leningrad, 1948, p. 400.

47 Artamonov, *Khazar*, p. 8.

50. Who is to blame for ' '?

It could be said that the attack on the interests of the merchant elite of the Jewish community, carried out by Khorezmian mercenaries and Russian warriors, was the result of the wrathful will of kings such as Benjamin, Aaron and Joseph during the era of the nominal Khazar khans, whose names have been lost to history. Indeed, little blood was spared; the people living on the shores of the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea had perished needlessly. The Russian warriors, who had meddled in the affairs of the foreigners, were set aside and slaughtered daily by the Khazars; the Alans lost their Christian saints; the Slavs paid taxes for nothing, merely so that the Pechenegs would leave them in peace; and the Guz people kept watch without blinking an eye to protect their tents from the sudden attacks of foreigners. This state of uncertainty was a torment for all peoples, save the merchant elite of the Volga and the mercenaries who served them. Yet the latter would pay the price of survival with their blood.

If we were to attempt to judge the situation created by the Jewish community in Khazaria, the following question immediately arises: What else could one have expected? The Jews had been forced to flee to Khazaria due to the persecution they faced in Iran because of their proximity to the Mazdakites; in Byzantium, however, they had allied themselves with the Arabs in the face of commercial competition from the Greeks and Armenians. Neither the Greeks nor the Armenians were any less capable in trade than the Jews, and moreover, they had the support of the authorities behind them. The Jews, too, were relying on the support of a foreign power—the Arabs—to withstand this competition. However, the caliphs also demanded their assistance during military operations. For example, the surrender of castles on the condition that all surviving Christians be sold into slavery and that Christian clergy be humiliated. Naturally, the relatives and fellow believers of those who had died were not pleased with this situation.

The Khazar pagan allies had done the same in Muslim cities. The only difference was that the Khazar Jews had chosen the Dailami Shiites—that is, the mountain dwellers—who had no connection to trade, as their victims. However, in 945, the commander of the Daylamites had entered Baghdad and begun to govern the country in the name of the caliph under the title of 'emir al-umara'. This meant that the Khazar Jews had lost the war they had waged for the Caspian Sea. Now, their only option was to bring their allies in Central Asia and the recently conquered Eastern Europe into the conflict.

The Jewish community drew the military force it required from Central Asia and paid their wages with taxes collected from Eastern Europe. Could it have been any other way? By relinquishing power, it would have lost the wealth it had accumulated and its control over transit trade; consequently, it would have been deprived of all the means necessary to sustain its existence. The townspeople and merchants could not return to farming and livestock rearing. For they lacked the necessary skills and abilities to carry out such work. To lose power meant losing their wealth, and subsequently their very lives. That is why they had to hold on and prevail.

However, victories and the expansion of the state do not always bring with them the opportunity for cultural advancement and consolidation. The conquest by a powerful ethnic group is often more of a burden than the benefits it might bring. The Kama Bulgars, who were the first to break free from Khazar hegemony, had proven this. Following the Bulgars, during the ensuing period of turmoil, the Guz and Pechenegs also gained their independence, and all of them became enemies of the Judeo-Khazars.

The victories won by Pesah had enabled the Khazar king to impose the 'ruus' tax on the Rus' people of the Podneprov region. This was because the Varangian kings were prepared to pay the 'peace tax' collected from the Slavs, who were considered less organised and therefore less dangerous. Yet the events that followed would also arise because of this tax.

If we were to apply the ethical norms of humanity to the historical process, we would hold the Varangians responsible for the calamity that befell the Russian lands. However, the reason for this is not that they seized Kiev by deceit—for in war, betraying one who trusts you is considered treachery. Nor can we blame them for plundering the conquered Slavic tribes—who failed to preserve their independence by refusing to pay taxes—or for the fact that the konungs who came to power over the Polyan tribes, then known as the Rus', lost every war they waged against the Greeks, Pechenegs, Deylemians and Khazar Jews. On the contrary, their despicable aspect lies in the fact that, having seized the initiative among the Rus, they reduced the country to utter ruin and reduced it to the status of a vassal of the Khazar kings. Worse still, these invaders, who handed over their own swords as tribute to the Khazar Jews—effectively disarming their own army—drove their brave warriors into battle against enemies armed with Byzantine fire or light curved swords. This is what a ruler should not do—

Such irresponsibility, such insolence regarding the duties he was bound to perform, is such that nothing can justify him.

However, the small Varangian *druzhinas* could not have established themselves in a foreign land without the support of any local group. The Varangian-aligned 'Gostomils',⁴⁸ who sacrificed their own country and the lives of their kinsmen for a set of despicable interests, are even more culpable in this regard. Resistance against the Varangians existed only in Novgorod. Information on this matter can only be found in the Nikonovskiy Chronicle, written at a later date.⁴⁹ We can rely on this source. Were it not for the inevitable bewilderment caused by the scepticism regarding the tales of the Varangian kings' heroism, no one would have given a second thought to the "Norman theory" of Russia's emergence put forward by the "Western" Nestor, and the ancient, free and renowned period of the history of the Rus' Khaganate would have been passed over in silence. Yet such people did exist in Old Russia, and their numbers were likely not small.

Nevertheless, this enthusiastic view of events that took place in history hundreds of years ago requires an objective analysis. The Varangians' allies, whether they wished to or not, helped Russian lands to gain a foothold in the world market, which was then under the control of the Khazarian Jews. Russia was selling furs, tin and slaves on the world market; but as it was providing these in lieu of the taxes it was required to pay, it received nothing in return.

Herein lies the explanation for why Prince Igor the Elder, who collected taxes from the Drevlians and was forced to discharge part of his *druzhina*, was later killed by the Drevlians.⁵⁰ The *druzhina* was excessively

48 In later chronicles, this term has been personalised as the proper name 'Stareysina Gostomisl', meaning 'one sympathetic to foreigners'. (cf. PVL. H. 22, p. 214).

49 "...Rurik and his men insulted the people of Novgorod, treating us as though we were their slaves, and committed many atrocities... That year, Rurik killed Vadim the Brave and many other prominent figures from Novgorod."

50 According to Nestor's dry account, "the Drevlians killed Igor and his *druzhina*." Lev the Deacon records that the captured Igor was "tied to two trees and torn in two." (Lev the Deacon, *History in Ten Books*. Trans. M. M. Kopilenko. Book IV, Chapter 10. St Petersburg, 1820, p. 66. Hereafter: Deacon, *History*.) As for the date of Igor's death, the chronicler is in error. It should be 944 rather than 945. (PVL. H. 22, p. 295).

He had to collect taxes and send a portion of them to Khazaria to prevent Pesah from launching a second attack. Igor was terrified of the Khazars and had therefore decided to collect the required sum at the lowest possible cost. By reducing the number of security units to save money, he not only lost his own life but also caused the deaths of his followers. But he is not worth mourning. For it is thanks to his mistake that the Russians have regained their independence and prestige.

Now, let us state our conclusion, which is essentially self-evident.

It is pointless to blame the ancient peoples for disregarding their vital interests, for sometimes emerging victorious and settling scores with the conquerors, and for sometimes perishing in battle. However, those who, whilst pursuing a cause, lose it through their own apathy and folly—and thereby leave those who believed in them in a difficult position—can and indeed must be held to account. The ancient Russians and Slavs, who changed not only their rulers but also their enemies, had understood this.

IX. THE AGONY OF KIMERAN (945– 966)

51. 's Coup in Kiev

The Khazar administration had managed these peoples—as numerous as the Kara Bulgars, as cultured as the Alans, as brave as the Pechenegs, and as headstrong as the Guz—as long as it kept them under its rule. It was always possible to buy off commanders, hire a people's brave men, seduce influential women, or deceive traitors. Since the creative elements of psychology were driven by traditions that could be altered through education, it was also important to be able to calculate the ethno-psychological response.

However, unlike the peoples listed above, the ancient Slavic-Russians were a passionate people in the 10th century. The rupture caused by the Varangian invaders—that is, the transition from the dynamic phase to the inert phase—claimed many victims and led to many shameful situations, but it had not entirely eradicated the passionate spirit within the country.

The orphans of warriors who had perished from Greek fire in the Black Sea and from epidemics in the Caspian Sea—children untouched by technological advancements and untrained in European methods—had been raised on fertile soil and in a secure environment. They knew who had sent their fathers, from whom their first cherished swords had been taken, to their deaths. They had seen with their own eyes where the squirrel and sable furs had gone, and why their mothers and sisters had frozen to death. They listened to the cries of the crowds rising from Kiev, where the knàzs, protected from the people by the ever-present army of the Khazar khans, resided.

It was in this environment that the contemporaries of Prince Svyatoslav had grown up.

According to the authentic source—the chronicle—Prince Svyatoslav was born in 942. His legitimate father, Igor, was an ‘active statesman’ in 879; however, by 942 he was over 66 years old, and his wife Olga was around 49 or 50. Svyatoslav was their first child and was indeed Olga’s son. As for Igor Rurikovich, in the author’s view, by the end of 969, the now fully grown Olga was far more energetic and influential than a 76-year-old man.¹

Strangely enough, however, Olga did not live in Kiev with her son, but in Vyshgorod, where Svyatoslav’s ‘pupils’—that is, his disciples—including a man named Asnud, and his father’s voivode, Sveneld, were based.

Sveneld maintained his drujina with the taxes collected from the Drevlians and the Ulichs. Igor considered this drujina to be far too extravagant for him. For he was obliged both to pay tribute to the Khazars and to maintain his own drujina. In 941 and 943, by participating in the organised campaigns, the Prince of Kiev had purchased his freedom from the Khazar king. However, in 944, ‘Igor, urged on by his drujina’ (to collect taxes from the subjects belonging to Sveneld and his drujina), organised a campaign into the old Rus’ territories; Although Sveneld acknowledged that Igor also had a right to the taxes, a conflict arose between Igor’s drujina and Sveneld’s men and the Drevlians—that is, Sveneld’s tributaries—and in this conflict, Igor was killed by Sveneld’s son, Mstislav the Fierce.”²

Shahmatoff’s version dispels one of the nonsensical tales that portray Nestor as a greedy man surrounded by a band of reckless fools. But how can a man demobilise his troops whilst remaining in a plundered country?! Whether Igor and his advisers believed the Drevlians to be weak, and whether they fell victim to a plot hatched in Vyshgorod, is another matter. Yet one question remains unclear: why did the Kyiv druzhina, a knàz

1 Nestor has distorted the truth. In 946, Prince Mal requested the hand of Olga, who was 54 years old at the time. Strangely enough, this event is depicted not as a dynastic marriage but as a didactic tale. When it was accepted by Constantine Porphyrogenetos in 955, according to Nestor’s account, Olga was an exceedingly ‘beautiful-faced’ woman, and the basileus fell in love with her. A woman of 62? One of two things is wrong: either Olga’s age, or everything else. (See Gumilev, *Skazaniye*).

2 Shahmatov, *Raziskania*, p. 365.

If not as such, did they not take revenge on the traitor Mstislav Lùtīy for the death of one of their comrades-in-arms? Furthermore, how could such a decision be taken at Vyshgorod when Kyiv's forces were twice as strong as theirs? Finally, why did the plot succeed, and why was revenge taken on Mstislav Lùtīy only in 975, when he was killed by Oleg Svyatoslavič, a member of his own entourage?

Something is missing in both versions. In our view, the influence of the Khazar ruler Joseph has been overlooked.

The Prince of Kiev had become a vassal of the Khazar king following Pesah's campaign and relied on his support. Consequently, he had begun to disregard the agreements he had made with his subjects, believing that they would value their lives more than their property. This is a typical behavioural issue among Jews, who fail to take the feelings of others into account. Sveneld and his drujina were resentful and regarded being deprived of their share of the taxes as a humiliating act that would lead to the prince's death. However, as Igor and the Varangians around him had lost their popularity following two heavy defeats, the broad masses of the Drevlians supported the conspirators, thus ensuring the coup's success. For the prince's drujina had been isolated.

The ambiguities in the chronology do not end there. There are also doubts regarding the date of Olga's baptism and her arrival in Constantinople. B.

A. Rybakov, having re-examined V. N. Tatishchev's work—which is based on the lost chronicle of Ioakimova—and Byzantine sources, rejects the version of the 'Chronicle of Nestor' rather than supporting the views of G. G. Litavrin, who had previously rejected the year 957 as the basis.⁴ Y. Y. Golubinskiy goes even further, arguing that Olga arrived in Tsargrad baptised alongside the monk Grigory and had already converted to Christianity whilst still in Kiev.⁵

The religious conversion in the 10th century is not significant for us insofar as it marks a turning point in foreign policy, namely in Russian-Khazar relations; however, on the other hand, all authors agree that Olga's conversion took place by 955—

3 Litavrin, G. G. *On the dating of Olga's embassy to Constantinople* // *Historian of the USSR*. 1981. No. 5, pp. 180–183.

4 Rybakov, B. A. *Writing in Ancient Rus*. Moscow, 1987, pp. 385–391. From : Rybakov, *Paganism*.

5 Golubinsky, Y. Y. *History of the Russian Church*, p. 77; based on Rybakov, *Paganism*, pp. 385–391.

They record that he concealed his baptism as best he could, and that thereafter, according to the testimony of Jacob the Monk, he performed deeds pleasing to God.⁶ The war against Khazaria is among these latter deeds. However, Grand Duchess Olga remains cautious even as she permits Russian soldiers to serve in the Byzantine army in return for good pay. This became possible following the coup that took place after rapprochement had been established between these principalities.⁷ For after this rapprochement, the young Prince Svyatoslav, whilst his mother, Olga of Pskov, acted as regent, and Sveneld, the father of Mstislav the Fierce, also took the reins of government. The nature of the new regime is self-evident. Let us note in passing that the older generation bore Scandinavian names, whilst the younger generation bore Slavic ones. In short, actual power passed at times into the hands of the Slavs, and at other times into those of the Slavised Rus'.

There is just one point that remains unclear, or rather, on which no definitive conclusion has been reached: was Svyatoslav the son of Igor the Elder? The chronicles leave no room for doubt on this matter,⁸ but we do.⁹ However, from an ethnological perspective, this is not all that significant. Olga and Sveneld revived the Slavic-Russian tradition and restored it to its pre-Varangian axis, the consequences of which were extremely fruitful for the Russian lands, yet equally severe for the Jewish community of Khazaria.

But I simply cannot bring myself to follow A.A. Shakhmatov's lead in identifying the Drevlyan prince Mal with Lùty Sveneldich. That is simply out of the question!

After Igor's murder, Sveneld commanded the second conquest of the Drevlyans. I do not believe he would have drawn his sword against his own son! Oleg Svyatoslavich, who was not yet even 15 years old, killed Lùty Sveneldiç in 975.¹⁰ So this must have been done by his entourage—

6 B. A. Rybakov (op. cit., p. 391), whilst noting that chronicle records cannot be relied upon, accepts this testimony.

7 Shahmatov, *Raziskania*, p. 109.

8 The texts of the 1039 Kiev charters and the 1050 Novgorod charters, edited by A. A. Shakhmatov (Shakhmatov, *Raziskania*, pp. 543, 613).

9 It is a very common occurrence for fictitious genealogies to be invented in order to attach greater importance to individuals. For example, the real surname of Tsar Paul I of Russia is Gotorp.

10 Svyatoslav's date of birth is 942; Oleg is Yaropolk's younger brother. This means he could not have been born before 961; he was most likely born later.

Those present carried out the deed. The punishment for this was also meted out by Sveneld, Yaropolk's chief adviser. The latter incited Sveneld to kill Oleg. For it is clear that a small child cannot be held responsible for a crime committed by elderly druzhina members. After this incident, Sveneld is not mentioned again in the chronicles.

Most importantly, Vladimir—son of Maluša and nephew of Dobrynya—relied on the Varangians, using their help to kill Rogvolod and Yaropolk and seize Kyiv. However, Vladimir was forced to pay the Varangians 2 grivnas* per man and to contend with the opposition of the city's inhabitants, who did not wish to see them in Kyiv. And Vladimir was compelled to send the Varangians to Constantinople without receiving any compensation.

During Vladimir's reign, Dobrynya was the head of the administration. It would be absurd to think that he organised a campaign against his grandfather Sveneld to avenge his father (Lù-ty); yet, according to 10th-century ethical standards, it is possible. A version of the chronicle stating that the children of the Drevlyan prince Mal took action against the tyrants—namely Sveneld and his son—who had besieged them alongside their enemy Varangian groups, is more plausible. But the enemy of our enemy is not always our friend. As soon as the need for the Varangians ceased, the Slavic element, having rid itself of them, came to dominate both the Normans and the Rus', and from the latter retained only the same name, as the saying goes: 'The Polans are also called Rus' today'. The conversion to Christianity in 988 put an end to the traditions of the northern seas and Russia entered a phase of stagnation where optimal conditions existed for the flourishing of cultural values.

52. Face-to- -to-face

Having escaped Varangian rule, Russia was quickly reorganised without encountering any difficulties.

In 946, Sveneld, having subdued the Drevlyans, imposed a 'heavy tax' to be sent to the city of Vyshgorod, two-thirds of which belonged to Kyiv and the remainder to Olga.¹¹

* A coin weighing 500 grams of silver. (trans.)

11 PL. H. 4, p. 43.

In 947, Olga turned north and imposed a cemetery tax on the Msta and Luga. However, the left bank of the Dnieper was not subject to Kyiv's authority¹² and was likely an ally of the Khazar administration.¹³

It is unlikely that Joseph, King of the Khazars, was pleased that the rule of Kiev had passed from the Varangian king to a Russian prince, yet for some reason he did not send Pesah back. For in the five years that had elapsed, the external situation of the Jewish community of the Volga had become quite complicated. Not only had trade relations with Baghdad been severed following the Buwayhid victory, but trade with China had also lost its momentum. In 946, the Kidan [Kitan/Ch'i-tan] had seized Kaifeng, the capital of China and the main artery of caravan trade, and subsequently handed it over to the Shato Turks, who were enemies of both the Kidan and the Chinese.¹⁴ This turmoil had dealt a significant blow to trade. In France, too, a bitter civil war had broken out between the last Carolingians and the Dukes of Île-de-France. As previously noted, the Carolingians had taken the Jews of France under their protection in exchange for money. Consequently, their defeat and the inevitable collapse of the Western Empire did not bode well for the Jews.

Having assessed all these circumstances, the Khazar ruler Joseph realised that it would be in his best interests to abandon his planned campaign against Russia; however, the tension between them had begun to work against him. Olga, who had travelled to Constantinople, had converted to Christianity on 9 September 957, which meant that a close alliance had been forged with Byzantium, Khazaria's natural enemy. The attempt by Bishop Adalbert, who arrived in Kiev in 961 on behalf of the Western Emperor Otto I, to convert Olga to Catholicism—and thereby draw her into the German camp—had ended in failure.¹⁵ From that day onwards, Prince Joseph had lost all hope of making peace with Russia, and this was only natural. The war, it seems, began immediately after Olga's baptism.

It is evident from a letter sent by King Joseph in 960 to Hasday ibn Shafrut, vizier to the Umayyad Caliph of Al-Andalus, Abd al-Rahman III, that the war between Khazaria and Russia began in the 950s of the 10th century

12 This is evident from the fact that Volchiiy Hvost, one of Vladimir's commanders, re-subjugated the Radimichs in 984.

13 Shevchenko, *Na rubeje*, pp. 51–54.

14 Gumilev, **Muhayyel**, pp. 92–95.

15 Grekov, B. D. *Kiyevskaya Rus*. Moscow, 1949, pp. 458–459.

He states: "I live at the mouth of the river and do not allow the Russians arriving by ship to cross over into their lands (the lands of the Muslims). Likewise, I do not permit any of their enemies arriving by land to enter their country. I fight them (the enemies of the Muslims – L.G.) with all my might. If I were to leave them (unhindered – L.G.), they would wipe out the entire Ismaili realm all the way to Baghdad."¹⁶

Of course, this is an exaggeration. For the Buyids were quite firmly established in Iran, Baghdad and Azerbaijan. It is likely that Joseph was seeking to win over the Caliph of Al-Andalus and was attempting to encourage him to form an anti-Byzantine bloc in the Mediterranean, where the Greeks, with the support of the Russians, were attempting to capture Grit, the base of the Arab-Andalusian pirates. However, in 960, Nikephoros Phokas achieved victory, and thus King Joseph's hopes of securing the support of the Western Muslims were dashed.

Nevertheless, Byzantium was unable to provide practical assistance to Russia, which had taken on a new character. This was because Greek forces were occupied with attacks on Cilicia and Syria. Nikephoros Phokas captured Mopsuestia [Mamistra, Misis] and Tarsus in 965–966, conquered Cyprus, and had reached the walls of 'the great city of God', Antioch [Antakya].

These victories came at a very high cost to the Byzantine Empire. Constantinople suffered such a severe famine between 965 and 969 that the price of bread rose eightfold. Naturally, the government's popularity plummeted to zero.

However, an alliance with Byzantium had secured Russia the support of the Pechenegs, which proved crucial in the war against Khazaria. Having reached the western fringes of the steppe, the Pechenegs found themselves in a rather precarious position amidst the Greeks, Bulgars and Rus'. To avoid being crushed in this three-way struggle, they formed an alliance with the Russians and the Byzantines, thereby securing the right to trade safely between Kiev and Chersonesos, and they equipped the Russians with curved, light swords instead of heavy ones. This alliance lasted until 968, that is, until the next Russo-Byzantine war.¹⁷ However, during the life-and-death struggle with the Khazars, the Pechenegs had sided with the Prince of Kyiv.

¹⁶ Kokovtsov, *Yevreysko*, pp. 83–84.

¹⁷ *History of Byzantium*. II/231–233; PVL. H. 22, p. 312.

At that time, the allies of the Khazar khan were the Yases [Ossetians] and the Kasogs [Circassians], who had occupied the North Caucasian steppes in the 10th century. However, their submission to Jewish rule was doubtful, and they were not engaged in any activities. Those who remained faithful to their alliance with the Khazars were the Vyatichi, the Jews' tributaries. The Bulgars, however, had refused to assist the Khazars and had established friendly relations with the Guz, the Khazar king's enemy. The latter could only look to the Muslims of Central Asia for aid.

53. Open-Heartedness and the Benefits of the ‘ ’

It appears that in the east, the ally of Jewish Khazaria was the Samanid state of Tajikistan, which attracted attention through its active foreign trade and brilliant culture. But its situation was also complicated. Following the Abbasids' 150-year rule in Central Asia and Iran, the descendants of the Arabs, Persians, Sogdians and, to some extent, the Parthians had adapted to the new conditions and had coalesced into a monolithic Tajik ethnic group by the 10th century. At the head of the Tajiks stood the indigenous Samanid dynasty, and the culture it had developed shone like a diamond, yet compared to others, it resembled the setting of a ring.

It is impossible to do justice to this rich era in a few brief words; yet it is well known that crystals form as magma cools. For a century on his own, the noble landowner who held the throne of Ismail Samanî had succeeded in establishing magnificent vineyards, bustling markets so crowded you could not drop a pin, and dazzling Sunni mosques. The descendants of the warriors had become a cheerful and cultured bourgeoisie.

The Samanids soon began purchasing Turkish slaves (gulam) and forming an army from them in order to protect their state. Although they remained legally enslaved, they were able to advance in their careers (sometimes even becoming the chief executioner of a provincial governor). In reality, however, those who were actually enslaved served the more powerful free farmers and merchants. Essentially, they all carried swords and were all professional warriors.

There were also Turks who had converted to Islam beyond the borders. The Karluk had converted to Islam in 960; the warrior Chigil and the brave Yagma followed suit. The powerful Samanids, wary of their independence,

The Sunni community viewed these people with sympathy. The Shiites, however, were more hostile towards Muslim clerics than other tribes. By the 990s, the Samanids seemed to have surrendered to the Turkish mercenaries, the clerics and the urban dwellers of Bukhara, and in this situation they were unable to assist the Khazar Jews.

The Khorezm Valley, not far from the Aral Sea, was in a different situation. The oldest inhabitants of Khorezm—the Khorezmians or Hvalis—who resembled a green island in the midst of the yellow desert, had managed to escape the Arab massacres that had transformed the Sogdian cities. The Khorezm Shah had surrendered to the Arabs as early as 712, agreeing to pay tribute and provide troops; in this way, he had saved his aged and weary people.¹⁸

In the 10th century, there were two states in the Horezm Valley: the Horezm Shah ruled over those who had long lived in Kyat, whilst the inhabitants of Gurgenc were governed by a Turkic emir. These united in 996, and Horezm became an independent ethnic group living in a settled, agricultural society and speaking a Turkic language.

The descendants of the Khorezmians preserved the necessary traditions for this, whilst the passion was carried by the Turks, the majority of whom were Turkmen. Following the 10th century, thanks to exceptionally favourable conditions, this symbiosis had evolved into a systematic unity—that is, an ethnos within the framework of the Muslim super-ethnos.

One might ponder where the nomads living around the Aral Sea acquired this passion. These descendants of the Sarmatians must have shared the aforementioned passion with the Khorezmians, Sogdians and Parthians at the same time. It is true; that was indeed the case. But in the 6th–7th centuries, during the era of the Western Turkic Khaganate, an ethnic drift carrying its own distinctive traits had moved from the banks of the Orkhon to the outermost reaches of the population region.¹⁹ In short, the steppe warriors set out on a campaign to the west—

18 The Khorezmians are close relatives of the Parthians. Consequently, the starting point of their ethnogenesis dates back to the 4th–3rd centuries BC. However, there is also an incubation period, the duration of which cannot be estimated. This means that by the 10th century, the Khorezmians had gone through all the stages of ethnogenesis from the very beginning and were thus in a state of homeostasis, which enabled them to readily accept the passionate Turks, who were eager to live alongside them, into their midst without any difficulty. Naturally, this also led to their complete assimilation on the basis of peace.

19 N.I. Vaviloff demonstrated that recessive mutations are gradually pushed to the boundaries of species and racial groups. (Letter to Academician V.I. Vernadsky; based on pages 147–148 of the work **Nations, Races, Cultures** by N.N. Cheboksarov and I.A. Cheboksarova).

Meanwhile, they had sown their genes among the beauties of the region, and the descendants of those born of them had inherited their ancestors' passion.

Their contemporaries describe the Khorezmians as follows: "They fought bravely against the Guz; their ferocity made it impossible to approach them." (Istakhri); "They are hospitable people; they love to eat and drink; they are brave and formidable in battle." (Makdisî); "The people of that region (the Kyatli) are warriors and fighters", "his (Gurgenc's) people are renowned for their martial prowess and skill with the bow." (Hudûd al-'Alam); "Every year, with the onset of the cold in autumn, the Shah of Khwarezm would set out on a campaign against the Guzlar." (Birunî)²⁰

When the Guz people turned against the Khazar kingdom in the 10th century, Melik Yo-sif had justifiably pinned his hopes on receiving aid from Khwarezm. In the first half of the 10th century, the economic conditions in Gurgenc and Kyat were geared towards trade conducted via Üstyurt and Mangishlak, traversing the territories of the Khazars and the nomadic Guz. Had Melik Yosif or another Jew been on the Gurgenc throne, he would undoubtedly have supported the Jewish community of Khazaria. For this was in the interests not only of him, but of his country as well. However, the Turks were in power in Gurgenc, and they had secured an alliance agreement with the Bulgars—who had broken away from Khazaria for religious reasons—on terms that were not entirely unfavourable. The Guz, meanwhile, although they had fought against the Khorezmians, permitted merchants to pass through their lands in exchange for customs duties. As this trade did not yield much for Khorezm, the Turkish ruler's conscience was clear.

The concept of 'interest' has taken on different meanings across various ethnic groups and at different times. Money meant a great deal to the Emir of Gurgenc, but it was not everything. For instance, he could not buy the support of the mullahs and scholars, the enthusiasm of the mounted archers, the goodwill of neighbouring nomads, or even the love of his wives with money. In Asia, not everything is for sale. On the contrary, many things are given as gifts out of a sense of sympathy. Consequently, if the emir did not wish to see his throne turn into a grave, he was obliged to abide by this rule. Since the sole concern of the Khwarezmians in the 10th century was to wage constant jihad in the name of Islam, the ruler at their head was obliged to adapt his behaviour accordingly. And so he did.

²⁰ Tolstov, *In the Footsteps*, p. 244.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 242.

Makdisi states: "The ruler of Jurjan would sometimes seize the Khazar cities."; elsewhere, he says: "I heard that al-Ma'mun attacked them (the Khazars) from Jurjan; he defeated them and converted them to Islam. Later I heard that a people called the Rus from Byzantium attacked them and seized their lands."²² Ibn Miskawayh and Ibn al-Athir, however, record that in 965 a Turkic tribe attacked the Khazar khan. Khwarezm provided aid on the condition that the Khazars accept Islam, and subsequently "the Khazars and their khagan became Muslims."²³ Let us compare this information with what we have previously noted.

According to Mesudi's account, the Khwarezmians and the Jews were allies in 943. By 965, however, the Khazar Empire had collapsed. Consequently, there must have been changes in Khwarezmian policy during the intervening period. On reflection, one must acknowledge that King Joseph's fortunes turned with Olga's visit to Constantinople in 957. Thus, during these years (957–864), the Khorezmians, under the pretext of protecting the Khazars from the Guz and Rus peoples, converted the pagan inhabitants of the Volga delta to Islam. The latter, having received no favours from the rulers in their midst, gladly accepted this offer, and thus the way to the Itil was opened for Svyatoslav. Preparations for war, meanwhile, were already complete.²⁴

54. The Fifth Tragedy of the ' '

In the year 964, Svyatoslav had been taken by surprise on the Oka, in the land of the Vyatichi. The war between the Russians and the Khazar Jews was raging in full force; yet the Prince of Kiev had not decided to launch an attack across the Don steppe, which was held under the control of the Khazar cavalry. In the 10th century, the Russians' strength lay in their ships; but the Volga was also quite wide. The Russians, without engaging in much conflict with the Vyatichi, cut down trees in the forest and...

²² Ibid., pp. 252–253.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ S. P. Tolstov, contrary to Mesudi, argues that the Russians had conquered Khazaria before the Khorezmids arrived there, and attempts to link this to the Russians' defeat in Vladimir's campaign against the Bulgars in 985. (See Tolstov, *Po sledam*, p. 255). This is a baseless view.

²⁵ This is a response to A. A. Shakhmatov's doubts. (See Shakhmatov, *Raziskaniya*, pp. 118–119).

They carried out their operations and, in the spring of 965, having brought them down to the Oka and Volga and setting off towards the Itil,²⁶ they ended up behind the Khazar army situated between the Don and the Dnieper.²⁷

The expedition had been perfectly planned. The Russians waited for a favourable moment to land on the shore, secured the necessary provisions without looting, returned to their ships, and advanced along the Volga without falling victim to a sudden attack by the Bulgars, Burtas and Khazars. As for what happened afterwards, one can only speculate. Towards the source of the Sarisu, the Volga splits into two branches. The western one is still the Volga, whilst the eastern one is the Aktübe. A green island stretches between the two. The heart of the Jewish Khazaria, the Itil, is also located here.²⁸ The right bank of the Volga is covered in valleys, and it is likely that the Pechenegs had arrived there. The left bank is the Aktube, between which lie the sand dunes traversed by the Guz people. If a portion of the Russian fleet had advanced along the Volga and Aktube to land on the lower reaches of the Itil, the Khazar capital would have become a trap from which there was no hope of escape for the defenders.

The Russians' advance down the Volga was proceeding slowly, as it followed the river's natural course. In these circumstances, the local inhabitants (the Khazars) could take refuge amongst the dense, untouched delta thickets, and the Russians would be unable to find them there, even if they wished to. However, the descendants of the Jews and Turks displayed their former courage. It was not King Joseph who led the resistance against the Russians, but an unnamed khan. The chronicler writes: "Svyatoslav, who fought against the Khazars, captured their city"²⁹. I do not believe any of the defeated survived. But it is not known where the Jewish king and his entourage fled.

This victory determined the fate of both the war and Khazaria. The centre of the complex system had been eliminated, and the system had collapsed.

26 Artamonov, *Xazar*, pp. 426–429.

27 S. P. Tolstoff (op. cit., p. 256) suggests that the Russians, having encountered the Guz people near the upper reaches of the Don (that is, the upper part of the Itil), turned upstream along the Volga. However, as the current in the Volga was strong, they could only proceed with the help of boatmen. Under wartime conditions, such a manoeuvre is extremely dangerous. It must therefore be assumed that the Russians allowed themselves to be carried by the natural current of the Oka and the Volga, thereby remaining ready to engage the enemy.

28 Gumilëv, *Otkritiye*, p. 26.

29 It is stated there: "They took their city and Bela Veja". That is to say, the word 'city' here does not refer to Bela Veja. See *Xazar*, p. 427

The numerous Khazars did not submit to the Russian sword. They were under no obligation to do so. They knew the Russians had no business in the Volga delta, and the Russians should have been glad to have freed themselves from a tyrannical rule. For this reason, Svyatoslav continued his subsequent advance along the straight path constantly used by the nomads subject to the Turkic-Khazar khan, crossing the 'black lands' to the Middle Terek, that is, the Semender, from there to the Kuban steppe and the Don, and after the conquest of Sarkel, returned to Kiev without encountering any obstacles.

It is certainly not credible that Russian forces could have travelled by sea from the Volga to the Terek or from the Itil to the Semender. First and foremost, river vessels would have become stuck in the shallow parts of the delta, and furthermore, they were not built to withstand the rough waters of the Caspian Sea. Finally, it is not possible to proceed by water as far as the point where the present-day Grebenskaya station on the Terek is located. It is well known that the Russians' earlier expeditions to Gilan and Azerbaijan had been carried out with the support of the Judeo-Khazar administration, which provided them with guides and the necessary vessels. In 965–66, however, neither of these forms of support was available.

We must therefore accept the conventional account, which seeks a realistic explanation for the fact that, along the route taken by the Russian troops, they did not kill people but instead destroyed homes and gardens.

Having gone hungry along the long route through the semi-desert, the Russian soldiers plundered the well-tended vineyards and pomegranate orchards near Semender; but the local inhabitants were able to hide easily in the dense forest along the banks of the Terek. The inhabitants of Sarkel, however, had fled beforehand, as there was no cause to fight for and no one to fight against. The destruction of the Itil Jewish community had granted freedom to the Khazars and neighbouring peoples.

On the northern coast of the Caspian Sea, Derbent had grown stronger, and in the eastern region, the Emir of Khwarezm had gained power; but they were the steppe peoples who had tasted freedom—

30 Artamonov, *Xazar*, p. 427; Pašuto, V.T. *The Foreign Policy of Ancient Rus*. M., 1968, p. 93.

31 The location of Semender between the present-day Grebenskaya and Shelkovskaya stations has been identified (See Gumilëv, *Hazariya i Terek // Vest. LGU*. 1964. No. 24, pp. 78–88. On 'e% Gde 'e togda Semender*##Istoriq SSSR. 1969. No. 3, pp. 242–243), but V.T. Pashuto failed to notice this.

They could not keep them under control. Across the entire Great Steppe, a period of ethnic fragmentation lasting 250 years had begun. Following this process, as no one intervened in the nomadic way of life, the original medieval steppe cultural differences would take shape.

With the collapse of the Khazar Khaganate, it was not merely a state that ceased to exist, but also a key component of the international political, economic, religious and even ethnic relations. All parties relying on the support of militant Judaism had lost a crucial pillar of support. Consequently, the position of the Carolingian dynasty in France was undermined, and it was forced to cede its place to national princes and feudal lords. In China, certain anti-nomadic military rebellions had grown by adopting an aggressive stance against the emerging Song dynasty's national policy; the Caliph of Baghdad had weakened, losing control not only over the small emirates of Africa and Arabia but even over Egypt; disorder had been gnawing away at the Samanid Emirate. In short, the fall of Khazaria had been disastrous for its allies.

Strange as it may seem, those who attempted to seize a country that had lost its patron also failed. The Khwarezmians held out on the Volga from 977 to 985, but, unable to forge a genuine alliance with the Bulgars, they withdrew, leaving the Povolye to the infidel Guz. The latter, however, still constituted a large part of the population of Saksin³² on the Tabol River in the Volga Delta as late as the 12th century.³³

The Khazar Jews who managed to survive in 965 dispersed to various parts of their former state. Some settled in Dagestan (the Mountain Jews), whilst others moved to Crimea (the Karaites). These small ethnic groups, cut off from the main community, became relics amidst their numerous neighbours. The collapse of the Judeo-Khazar chimera had brought peace both to them and to the Khazars. Yet there remained Jews who had not lost hope of war and victory and had sought refuge in Western Europe.

32 Bolshakov, O. G., Mongait, A. A. *The Travels of Abu Hamid al-Garnati in Eastern and Central Europe (1131–1153)*. Moscow, 1971, pp. 27–30. Hereafter: Bolshakov, Mongait, *The Travels*.

33 Gumilev, *The Tale*, p. 171.

55. The Fall of the Chimera ()

Thus, the paths of the Jews and the Khazars were forever parted. The descendants of the Khazars in the Don Valley began to be called 'Brodniks'. However, the descendants of the Brodniks later changed this ethnonym and came to be known as the Cossacks.* Thanks to their close ties with the Principality of Chernigov, the Brodniks adopted the Russian language; they had already converted to Christianity by the 9th century and were incorporated as a sub-ethnic group within the Russian ethnic group.

The Khazars had no reason to love the Jews, who had caused them to lose their state. The economic prosperity of the Volga region had brought them no benefit whatsoever. Moreover, the culture of the ruling class was alien to them, and just as much at odds with their own.

The Iranian branch of the Jews had brought Mazdakite beliefs to the Khazars. Things beyond reason—that is, all manner of spontaneous events, nature, and human emotions themselves—were explained as evil. Things accepted by reason, however—even though reason itself can be fallible—were explained as good. As for the Byzantine branch, it had brought with it the rights of a foreign land—that is, the rights conferred by the absence of direct contact with the homeland's landscape; thus, both had become intolerable elements for the ethnic circles to which they were accountable only in times of need. Naturally, in the end, both nature and people had rebelled against them.

The fate of the ruling class of Khazaria—or, one might say, its dominant ethnic group—was shared by the country's indigenous people, with the exception of those who managed to flee beyond the Don or hide among the peaks of the Dagestan mountain range, beyond the Terek. The Volga Khazars found themselves in the most dire straits, as the lands that sustained them were submerged beneath the waves of the Caspian Sea. Whilst the Caspian Sea level stood at -36 metres in the 3rd century, by the 13th century it had reached -19 metres, signifying a rise in water levels of 17 metres. For the steep-sided coasts of the Caucasus and Iran, this rise held little significance, but for the flat northern shores bordering the Caspian Sea, the transgression was a catastrophe, and the region had turned into the Netherlands of Atlantis. Flowering vineyards, green pastures... all were submerged; only more

* Readers may find further information regarding the term 'Brodnik' on page 366 of the book *In the Footsteps of the Imaginary Kingdom*, published by Selenge Publications. (trans.)

the dry mounds of the ridges where the Khazar tombs were situated had managed to survive.

The Khazars had not only lost their ethnic unity, but had also been deprived of memories they could not relinquish—or, to put it in scholarly terms, their ethnic traditions. The descendants of the Khazars forgot that they were Khazars; the descendants of the Khazar Jews, however, had merely forgotten a country where their ancestors had lived and exerted influence. The rest is well known: for the Jews, the lower reaches of the Volga were not a homeland, but a place of resettlement. Consequently, the memory of that tragic failure held no practical significance for them. This is why Khazaria has become a land devoid of written, archaeological and ethnographic—that is, ritual and belief-related—historical sources. Nevertheless, despite all histories up to the 20th century having been subjected to scrutiny and criticism, the history of Khazaria cannot be written in accordance with classical methods.

56. Why Did the Chimera Not Emerge in Russia?

I believe that all the conditions were in place for the same ethnic entity that had been established in Khazaria to emerge in Russia during the 9th and 10th centuries. Foreigners, namely the Varangians, ruled over the lands of Kyiv for over 60 years – from 882 to 944 – and even afterwards continued to enjoy certain privileges as a warrior class. Although not mentioned by chroniclers, it is certain that many bastards emerged during this period. It is well known that chroniclers do not record what everyone already knows, but rather events they deem worthy of mention. For journalism is not the same as statistical record-keeping. Consequently, the fact that narrative sources do not provide direct information on intermarriage should not surprise the researcher. But another matter is puzzling: where did the descendants of the Varangians and Slavs go, leaving no trace, as if they had never existed? Yet the descendants of the Norwegians still live in Northern England and Normandy. In contrast, they are absent not only from Ireland and Sicily but also from the Podniepr region. Is there some rule at play here?

Since the sources do not provide an answer to our question, we must turn to theories and broad analogies. Let us compare the situation that arose in Russia with a situation that occurred twice, once in the 7th and once in the 9th century.

In the 6th–7th centuries, the Khazars intermingled with Turkic warriors; they, in turn, elected a prince from the Achina clan as their khan. This was an ethnic ‘xenophobia’ brought about by the ‘social structure’, that is, the emerging political unity. The Turkic-Khazar mixed-race people took the place of military commanders and, since their former homeland had been destroyed by the Chinese, they sacrificed their lives for their new homeland. In other words, they participated in Khazar ethnogenesis not as a foreign body, but as a component.

This is why the khan families’ preservation of their nomadic customs did not pose an obstacle to mutual social relations within the mixed ethnic community. After all, if the khan wishes to travel from the Volga to the Terek and the Don in the summer, let him go! It does no harm to anyone.

Another matter was the regime of Obadiah and his descendants, who had established their own community as the ruling class in Khazaria. They worked not for their subjects, but for themselves. Since the Khazars did not mix with this community, and the Jews did not deign to descend to the level of the masses, assimilation was out of the question. These two ethnic groups, belonging to two distinct super-ethnicities, lived in the same environment, looking down on one another. This is what a chimera is.

The Varangians in Kiev bore no resemblance to either the Turks or the Jews. For one thing, they were invaders. They were fleecing the local population like common ‘robbers’. They were savage. They acted on a whim. They sent their subjects on pointless expeditions to Khazaria and Pontus. They belonged to a different super-ethnic group; they had a different religion and a culture of their own. All this suggests that they bore similarities to the Jews of Khazaria.

On the other hand, the professional Varangians [mercenaries] were a multi-ethnic force. Their military units were composed not only of Scandinavians, but also of Baltic Polabian Slavs, Latvians and Finns. In this context, the Scandinavians were not representatives of their own ethnic group, but ‘rootless wanderers’—that is, people torn from their homelands by the upheavals of war. In other words, they had severed their ties with their old traditions; their children, however, had inherited the new traditions they had established from their mothers. Consequently, even if not the children of the Varangians, their grandchildren were, just like the Turkic children in Khazaria, of the Slavic-Russian lineage. This is particularly evident in the fact that the Varangian fathers’ wars—which often ended in defeat—

The fact that they had died, or that their descendants, weary of the passion of the ascendant phase—which was by no means a trivial matter—had chosen Kyiv over Constantinople, was the cause of this.

Had it been Swedish, Norwegian, Danish and German individuals who had come to Kyiv in the 12th century—as was the case in Pomerania and Brandenburg—rather than the ‘Varangians’ in the 9th century, their resemblance to the Khazar Jews would have been one hundred per cent. The Jewish Rahdanis were representatives of a super-ethnos artificially preserved at a high stage of passion. Being scattered here and there hindered them. For they were sustained by the anthropogenic landscape, that is, the cities. This ‘artificiality’, that is, the excessively rigid system, meant that there were no intense passionate upheavals, but the system had reached a point where it could break at any moment. That is why it shattered at the first powerful blow it received in 965. The Scandinavian ethnic groups, however, only reached the passionate phase that would have allowed them to participate in the formation of the super-ethnos in the 12th century, but by then they no longer posed a threat to the Grand Principality of Kyiv.

As can be seen, the Varangians did not form a chimera in Kyiv not because of their lack of ‘nobility’, but because, just as they had failed to establish themselves in Ireland, they were unable to do so here either. Only in Normandy, where they were scattered like cotton fluff, and in the desolate, blood-dried colony of Northumberland, did the Normans and Vikings—but not the Varangians—establish minimal contact with the local populations, spreading out across barren, ruined, or otherwise useless lands. Consequently, they ceased to be Norwegians; instead, they formed the sub-ethnic groups of the French and the English.

In 9th-century Russia, a turning point occurred, marking a transition from a dynamic phase to a phase of inertia. During this difficult period, the Varangians descended upon Russia like bacteria on an open wound. However, the ‘white blood cells’ – the local patriots – successfully combated this infection, leaving behind only the name of the military-princely dynasty, the Rurikids, as a trace of their presence. These were the mixed-race individuals assimilated into the body of the Slavic-Russian ethnic group. It must be assumed that this process of ethnic consolidation did not end with Olga’s political coup, but rather with a cultural movement—namely, the re-establishment of contact between the ancient Goth-Russian tradition and Byzantium—and the Christianisation of Russia by Vladimir Svyatoslavich. However, there was another phenomenon no less significant than those described above.

The passionate upsurge that engulfed Western Europe in the 9th century had led to the formation of a powerful and predatory super-ethnos there, and a confrontation with it was inevitable. This encounter could have been friendly or hostile, but in any case, it would have brought with it unstoppable consequences. This issue will be addressed in the following sections as well.

CHAPTER THREE: THE GEOGRAPHY OF THE NOOSPHERE

10th–12th Centuries ()

**(The Kievan Khaganate and its Transformation into
the Grand Principality)**



The Age of Uncertainty (966–985)



The Struggle for Survival



The Law of the Realm (986–1036)



On the Steppe Frontier (1036–1961)



Farewell to the Ages (1962–1115)



Different Religions, Different Beliefs



The Golden Autumn

X. THE AGE OF DOUBT (966– 985)

57. The Emergence of Slavic Western Allegiance ()

The Slavic ethnic unity, which had taken shape during the Great Migrations, had developed with virtually no obstacles until the 9th century. The Germanic tribes had moved westwards; the Byzantine Empire had been ravaged by the flames of religious wars sparked by differing sects. The Arab Caliphate, meanwhile, was far away. Only the Avars caused a little trouble; yet their successes had been thoroughly crushed by the Slavic Samo state. It was the Hungarians who brought the greatest storm upon the Slavs, yet like the Avars, they served as a buffer zone separating Slavic lands from Western Europe.

Until the mid-10th century, Western Europe posed no threat to its eastern neighbours; yet the united Saxon dynasty of Germany had become a powerful and expanding state. German aggression was not confined to the military sphere. Missionary priests were just as active as the knights, and the target of both was Eastern Europe. The pagan Slavs around the Elbe and Pomerania not only put up fierce resistance against the Germans but also frequently launched raids; however, their eastern neighbours along the Vistula had come under the influence of Western culture and had converted to Catholicism after 965. This meant becoming vassals to the emperor of the 'Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation'¹. Slavic allegiance to the West had thus begun.

Although they are fine examples of poetry, neither Slavic nor Scandinavian mythology could withstand the power and views of the Catholic missionaries

1 The official name of the empire founded by Charlemagne in 800 was: Sancta Imperia Romana Germanorum.

could hold their ground. In the 9th century, Denmark and southern Sweden had adopted Christianity; thereupon, by the 10th century, the pagan reaction in Scandinavia had ceased, and finally, in the 11th century, during the reign of Canute the Great in Norway, Christianity reached its zenith, thereby unifying the 'Christian World' super-ethnos of the Middle Ages, which was in a state of fragmentation.

As Sweden and Norway became the sources of the warrior paganism that had managed to hold its ground within their own lands, Christianity made only a rather slow and difficult progress in Scandinavia. The Varangians were seeking to compensate for the lands they had lost by settling abroad.

In the struggle against the Slavs, the West's adversary was Byzantium, which was in the inertial phase of its ethnogenesis. The wealthy and educated Byzantines had become captives of the imagination of the Hungarian commanders baptised in Constantinople and of the Russian Grand Duchess Olga. Constantine Porphyrogenetos viewed this baptism as a balancing of Eastern and Western beliefs and, to this end, appealed to King Otto I of Germany in 959, requesting the dispatch of a bishop and priests. The Germans were Polans, and after all, they had been personally invited by the Queen of the Rugians (Helena regina rugorum). Archbishop Adalbert, who arrived in Kiev with his entourage in 961, "returned in 962 having achieved nothing, and indeed, whilst some of his companions were killed on the return journey, he himself barely escaped with his life."² What was it that troubled Adalbert in Old Russia? What troubled him was that the Russians had adopted Orthodoxy without first accepting Catholicism. For some reason, opposition to Westernisation had emerged in Russia. Let us pause for a moment to consider this matter.

As information regarding the 10th century is fragmentary, we are unable to shed light on the historical and cultural events during the chronological gap up to the year 961. However, if we were to lay all the available information before us, we might then find the answer we are seeking.

In the 9th century, the Carolingian emperors received money from Jewish merchants in order to maintain the strict policy they were pursuing, and in return undertook to protect them. In 828, Louis the Pious granted Jewish merchants the right to have their ships escorted by his own officials

2 Priselkov, M. D. *Essays on the Ecclesiastical and Political History of Kievan Rus' in the 10th-12th Centuries*. St Petersburg, 1913, pp. 12-13.

had issued a protective decree.³ These ships were carrying Slavic slaves, the majority of whom were Christian. Agobardus, Archbishop of Lyon, complained in vain that Jewish merchants were selling Christian slaves to Spain (to the Muslims) and that the authorities were merely standing by and watching.⁴ Furthermore, to prevent them from gaining their freedom through the Church's humanitarian aid, the baptism of slaves held by Jews had also been prohibited. The reason was well known: Jews paid one-tenth of their income as tax to the court, whilst Christians paid one-eleventh. Did the Germans care what happened to the Slavs?!

Immediately following the triumph of Christianity in the Frankish state, slavery was abolished and the word 'servus' came to denote a castle dweller who could even sell his own land. Consequently, in the 9th and 10th centuries, Slavic lands became a source of slaves for Jews, just as Africa had been in the 17th to 19th centuries. As the Carolingian dynasty lost its power in the war against the feudal lords, the rights granted to Jews also increased. In 906, at the Bavarian-Slavic customs post in Passau, Jewish slave traders were granted equal rights with Christian traders. Slavic youths and young women were sent from here via Verden, Lyon and Narbonne to the Arabs in Spain.⁵ Many of these unfortunate souls had been baptised, and only archbishops could purchase them; for instance, Adalbert complained that he did not even have enough money to buy the slaves held by a single Jew.⁶

As a result of this economic policy pursued by Otto I, the Slavic countries where Catholicism had spread were rapidly integrated into the general economic system of Western Europe. As the Jews had monopolised the trade in salt, wheat, furs and Hungarian wine in Poland, King Mieszko (960–992) had not yet managed to consolidate the Latin faith during his reign.⁸ The naive Poles, treating foreigners as guests and protecting them—

3 Sipper, I. *The Emergence of Capitalism among the Jews of Western Europe* (until the end of the 12th century). St Petersburg, 1910, p. 22. Hereafter: Sipper, *The Emergence of Capitalism*.

4 Agobardus, *De insolentia Judaeorum* (Cited in Wipper I., op. cit., p. 22).

5 Schipper, *The Emergence of Capitalism*, p. 26.

6 Ibid.

7 The Archives of Marx and Engels, Vol. 1, p. 65.

8 Schipper, *The Origins of Capitalism*, p. 26.

They had opened their borders. For they had not yet faced the scourge of the Khazar system and had not realised the price the Khazars had paid for their hospitality. But the Kievians, having grasped the nature of what was happening, did not wish to repeat the Khazar experience and had therefore turned their attention to Constantinople.

The Greeks were no worse traders than the Jews, but they followed a different path. They also needed Slavic youths, but not as slaves; rather, they were required as warriors who were more likely to be hired on a wage basis than purchased. Furthermore, they did not need the mediation of Jewish merchants everywhere in the 10th century; for they were already direct neighbours of Eastern Byzantium. Byzantium's western borders in the 10th century, meanwhile, extended as far as Venice. The Council of Constantinople, by exerting pressure on Venetian merchants who had secured certain commercial privileges in 922, not only prohibited the admission of Jewish ships but also banned the import of Jewish goods and their declaration as if they were their own. This marked the culmination of a century-long struggle between the Greeks and the Jews for economic dominance in the Mediterranean. Only Western Europe and Fatimid-ruled Egypt remained for the Jews. This was because the rise of the Berbers and Tuaregs in Africa and Spain, and of the Seljuk Turks in the Near East, had effectively barred Jewish merchants from these regions. The steppe warriors were not in pursuit of luxury, and for this reason, they were not keen on financial operations they did not understand. The Eastern Slavs, believing that Byzantine political activities would not reach them, were the only ones participating in such activities. This is why Byzantine culture had become appealing and had found its way.

However, it was not the West but the North that offered the strongest resistance to Byzantine Orthodoxy. It was not the Slavic Rus' people, but the Normans who led the struggle against this new worldview, and they were also drawing Olga's opponents into their ranks. At the head of these principled pagans stood the crown prince and, at the same time, the conqueror of the Khazars, Svyatoslav. What could Olga possibly do?

The best course would have been to relinquish power entirely to her son and step aside.¹⁰ Yet for some reason the opposite occurred: her son set off on a campaign to distant lands, and—

9 Ibid., p. 27.

10 M. D. Priselkoff (op. cit., p. 14) assumes that he did the same, but a detailed analysis of the events suggests otherwise.

Instead, whilst remaining in power, he was occupied with raising his grandchildren, whom he had scarcely ever seen.

This is precisely what is striking. Whilst the Prince and his pagan retinue were on campaigns, the pagan populace paid their taxes, whilst the Christian community of Kiev ran the country. As there was a balance of political power, the parties lived side by side in peace. It was in 889, at a time when the drought caused by the northern cyclones had turned the Aral region and the lower reaches of the Syr Darya into a desert, that the events in which the Pecheneg remnants appearing on the steppes around the Black Sea played a pivotal role were to unfold during such a tense period.¹¹

It was not all the Pechenegs, but only the most passionate among them who had migrated westwards. The others had remained on the shores of Lake Chelkar and were engaged in sheep farming. These were the 'poor Pechenegs' whom the Khazar rulers had captured, enslaved and sold to Islamic countries.¹² Consequently, the Pechenegs who had come westwards to the banks of the Dnieper and the Danube were powerful enough to compel their neighbours to treat them with respect.

58. The Division of Khazaria

Svyatoslav's magnificent victory had liberated Kyiv and the Rus' lands, yet the conquerors' situation was by no means encouraging. The entire left bank of the Dnieper was hostile to the Kyiv administration. The Seversk region had been under Khazar control since the 8th century. In 965, Svyatoslav's route to the Volga to encircle the Seversk region passed through a hostile territory that was no less dangerous than that of the Vyatichi. From the moment Olga began implementing her policy shift towards Byzantium, the name Chernigov ceased to be mentioned in Russian chronicles, which indicates that it had been lost to the Kyiv Khaganate. A few years later, the Severians would also turn a blind eye to the Pechenegs, who lived on the left bank, marching on Kyiv.¹³ In short, the wealthy and powerful Seversk region was not dependent on Kyiv.

11 Gumilëv, *Istoki ritma*, pp. 85–94.

12 For detailed information on the Pechenegs, see Artamonov, *Xazar*, pp. 350–352.

13 Shevchenko, *Na rubeje*, p. 51.

The Radimichs had seceded, the Vyatichs were maintaining their independence, and the Prince of Polotsk, Rogvolod, was effectively displaying hostility.¹⁴ Those remaining loyal to Kyiv were only Novgorod, Smolensk,¹⁵ the Drevlyan region, and the Tverians and Ulichs, who had been subjugated. However, the lands of the latter, stretching along the Bug and Dniester, were used alternately by the nomadic Pechenegs scattered across the wetter parts of the steppe.

The western borders were less clearly defined and only by the late 10th century and the early 11th century.¹⁶

The former Polyan region had passed to the Poles and formed the nucleus of the emerging Poland. The union of the Poles and the Rus' as two branches of the Eastern Slavs had prevented a political conflict that might have arisen in the mid-10th century.

Svyatoslav's blow against the Jewish community of Khazaria was severe, but not entirely devastating. As Svyatoslav returned from the Lower Volga via Sarkel, he turned towards the Kuban and Crimea. This was because Khazar fortresses remained there, and these controlled trade with Byzantium; thanks to this, a small state with its capital at T-mutarakan had managed to survive between 966 and 986.

According to information obtained by Arab authors, the war in the North Caucasus was still ongoing in 968–969. Ibn Hawqal records that he encountered refugees from Khazaria in Gurgan, that they told him of the destruction in the Itil and Semender regions, and that the Rus subsequently went to 'Byzantium and Al-Andalus'. The ¹⁷ who went to Rum, that is, to Byzantium, likely joined Svyatoslav's army in Bulgaria and Thrace, but why did the other Russians go to Spain?

It is claimed that a group of Russians were dissatisfied with the Kievan administration and therefore went to Spain by a route they knew

14 Alekseyev, L. V. *Polotskaya zemlya* // *Drevnerusskie knq'estva X-XIII vv.*, p. 218.

15 Syedov, V. V. *The Land of Smolensk* // *Old Russian Manuscripts X-XIII Centuries*, p. 249.

16 Tolochko, P. P. *The Kyiv Region* // *Ancient Russian Kingdoms of the 10th-15th Centuries*, p. 10.

17 Paşuto, *Foreign Relations*, p. 95.

It was dangerous to do so. The Russians had already launched an invasion of Al-Andalus in 844, plundering the area around Seville and leaving a bad impression on the Arabs. This is why, in July 971, Ibn al-Idari would write the following lines: "The accursed Zoroastrians of Urdman set out and arrived at the western shores of al-Andalus."¹⁸ This time, the Russians did not risk organising a raid; instead, in 968, they landed in Galicia, plundered Santiago and even killed the archbishop, only to be driven back in 971 by Count Gonzalo Sanchis.¹⁹ From that date onwards, they were never heard of again. Russia had lost many of its brave warriors; yet it had not weakened, but rather grown stronger. Consequently, potential rebels were the sort of people no army would want.

Although the Kievan Rus' was far from being a monolithic entity, it did not possess an overly mosaic structure either. However, in 967, Svyatoslav's relatively small army defeated the Bulgarians with the aid of the powerful cavalry of the Hungarians and Pechenegs, whilst another army, supposedly summoned from Bulgaria, was completing the conquest of the North Caucasus.

Now a question: if Svyatoslav was fighting along the Danube, who was it that defeated Russia's enemies in the Lower Volga and Terek regions? It was none other than the steppe Turks, who were Russia's allies between 967 and 968. Ibn Hawqal notes that during the Russo-Khazar war, the Pechenegs were the Russians' allies and their "sharpest" swords.²¹ As we learn from Constantine Porphyrogenetos, the Byzantines used the Pechenegs against all their enemies; consequently, the "war against the Khazar Khaganate" was likely concluded with their assistance. This makes sense; for the Pechenegs sustained themselves through plunder, whilst the Greeks were thus ridding themselves of their Jewish rivals. Consequently, there is no evidence whatsoever to support the view that the Slavic-Russians launched two campaigns against Khazaria and once again plundered Semender's pomegranate orchards.²²

18 Ibid., p. 140.

19 Müller, *History of Islam*, IV/109; Weber, *General History*, VI/500.

20 Chronicle of the Year 6475 (967). (See Ribakov, B.A. *Kiyevskaya Rus i russkiye knàjestva*. Moscow, 1982, p. 378; for textual criticism and interpretation of the dates, see *ibid.*, p. 380).

21 Minorsky, V. F. 'Where Did the Ancient Rus' Travel?' // *Eastern Sources on the History of the Peoples of Eastern Europe*, ed. A.S. Tveretina. Moscow, 1964, p. 26.

22 Mošin, V. *Rus and Khazaria under Svyatoslav* // *Kondakov Seminar Anum*. Vol. VI. Prague, pp. 193–195; Pašuto, *Vnešnyaya*, p. 95 (A.P. Novo-

Of course, the full details of this war have not been described with sufficient clarity.

It is well known, however, that Jewish rule in Khazaria had been overthrown, the pagan Khazars had embraced Islam, and the Russians had failed to gain even an inch of territory, either in the Volga region or along the shores of the Caspian Sea. In contrast, the Emir of Derbent grew in power on the western coast of the Caspian, whilst in the east, the Emirate of Khwarezm expanded as far as the lower reaches of the Volga. As for Judaism in the Volga region, it quietly disappeared, giving way to Islam.

59. Demons or the Gods of the ‘ ‘

The simultaneity of ethnogenesis in the Near East and Eastern Europe during the 1st–4th centuries led to certain parallels in the spiritual lives of the newly emerging ethnic groups. In the 3rd century, two religions were in conflict in the eastern part of the Roman Empire: Christianity and Mithraism. Both religions were far removed from the original Hellenistic cult of the Olympian gods. Mithraism lost its position as a worldview following the death of Julian the Apostate, but Arian Christianity had triumphed, and this would form the starting point for the subsequent narrative.

The history of Eastern Europe is remarkably poorly understood, yet a similar situation can be observed there. The Goths, who spent the entire third century fighting the Illyrian Mithraic emperors, had adopted Arian Christianity—which was prevalent in the Roman Empire at the time—by 360. It appears that the Arian doctrine persisted in Eastern Europe until the 10th century. This is because the text of the earliest chronicles contained not the standard religious symbol, but one consistent with Arian doctrine. This was still the case, yet its very existence serves as evidence that Christians were living in the Podneprov region from the 4th century onwards.

Nikea's religious views had spread among the coastal Goths (Tetraxites), the Alans, the mountain tribes of Dagestan and the western Khazars. By the 10th century

(paragraph written by Seltsviy); Kalinine, T.M. *Svedeniya Ibn-Ha-ukalya o poxodax Rusi vremeni Svyatoslava*//Drevneyšije gosudartstva na terriotorii SSSR: Materiali i issledovaniya. 1975. M., 1976, pp. 92–98. For a critique of the proposed view, see Saxarov, A. N. *The Diplomacy of Svyatoslav*, pp. 45–48.

Christianity was not a new religion for the peoples of Western Europe, but rather one of the established worldview patterns. However, amongst the Slavs living alongside the Thraco-Illyrians, a variant of the ancient Mithraic worldview—which was distinct from both Hellenism or Scandinavian polytheism and Christianity—prevailed.

There is no need to delve into the details of the Slavs' pagan cult, as this would divert us from the subject, but let us note that the Slavs had two groups of deities. One group of deities had arisen from the very essence of nature; the others were the spirits of the ancestors. The former were benevolent, the latter ugly and full of malice. They were called 'rusalki' [water nymphs], but later this word was supplanted by the Turkish term 'ubur' or 'upır'. The fact is, the deities in this category, as if they were equals, did not fight amongst themselves.²³ But the others did fight. Belbog (the White God) and Chernobog (the Black God), for instance, bear a resemblance to the deities of the Tibetans adhering to the Bhon religion—an eastern variant of Mithraism—which is evident at first glance. Bog Beliy Svet (God of White Light) and Dlinnie Ruki (Long-Armed) Devil were the two rivals of the personified cosmos.²⁴ There is no basis for accepting this Mithraic world model as the first prototype of an ancient worldview. Mithraism, like Christianity, Islam and Buddhism, was a proselytising religion and could have reached the Slavs through missionary activity. Indeed, this is demonstrated not only by the 12th-century pantheon but also by the presence of the cults of Rod, Rojanits and Šor, although the roles they played at that time have almost entirely faded from memory.²⁵

Thus, the development of worldviews following the passionate impulse of the first century followed the same trajectory, yet led to different outcomes. In Rome, Christianity had prevailed over Mithraism, but Mithraism was experiencing its heyday among the Slavs. Although Christianity had penetrated as far as the region's outermost reaches, during the period of severe upheaval in the 9th century, even though Perkunas and—

23 Rybakov, B. A. *Kievan Rus'* // History of the USSR from Ancient Times to the Present Day. Vol. 2, pp. 502–503. Hereafter: Rybakov, *Kievan Rus'*.

24 Gumilev, L. N., Kuznetsov, B. I. Bon // Proceedings of the VGO. Vol. 15, L., 1970, pp. 72–90. Gumilëv, L. N. *The History of Discovery through Art/Old Bulgarian Painting*; M., 1975, pp. 19–24.

25 Komarovič, V. L. *The Cult of the Family and the Land in the Royal Environment of the 11th–13th* // TODRL. Vol. X. Moscow–Leningrad, 1960, pp. 94–104.

or because a new enemy such as Perun had emerged, it had begun to spread once more in Eastern Europe, if not immediately.²⁶

The early Christians had become accustomed to associating with pagan gods who, with the advent of the Christian message, had transformed into evil and insidious demons. For example, Apollyon, whom the Greeks held in the highest regard in the Apocalypse, is described as the ‘angel of the bottomless pit’, which is identical to the Jewish Avaddon. (Revelation IX, 11). Consequently, when Christians came face to face with Perun, they immediately assigned him a place in the cosmos. Just as Serapis in Egypt and Zeus of Olympus in Hellas had been eliminated by the end of the 4th century, so too would their northern counterpart, Perun—who demanded sacrifices and particularly favoured humans—meet the same fate.

It should be borne in mind, however, that the gods of the pagans were not regarded as beings existing in this world. In other words, they were not like the Christian Trinity, the Muslim Allah, or even the ancient Persians’ Ormuzd. On the contrary, they were regarded as living organisms, but were considered more powerful than humans. This was because it was thought that, like other organisms, they possessed the same structure and lived on the earth. In short, just as humans are more perfect and greater than ants, so too were they more perfect and greater than humans. This view was accepted by Christianity as early as the late 2nd century, and indeed, Satan was added to this category of beings.

It was not difficult to see that the relationship between God and Satan was hostile in both the Old Testament and the New Testament.²⁷ However, as the Old Testament’s view is close to the bourgeois perspective of the late antique period, the ‘Book of Enoch’—which depicts Satan, who lost his standing in heaven in 165 BC due to his rebellion, as an angel—

26 Aniĉkov, Y. V. *Yaziĉestvo i drevnaya Rus*. St Petersburg, 1913, p. 319; Rybakov, B. A. *The Religion of the Ancient Slavs*. Moscow, 1981, pp. 19–20.

27 “One day, when the heavenly beings [the sons of God] came to present themselves before the Lord, Satan also came with them...” (Job 1:6) and the rest of the verse contains a conversation, followed by a trial of Job. Jesus Christ, in a similar situation, says, “Get away from me, Satan!” (Matthew 4:10). And Satan departs! Where to? Probably into the “outer darkness” that 20th-century physicists call a vacuum (Matthew 8:12). There, according to the words of Jesus Christ, the “sons of the king” will revolt (ibid.). Which ones? I suppose the Jewish Hasmonean dynasty, that is, the upholders of tradition.

It had served as the basis for the addition of a spurious section titled “The Book of Secrets.” This section, which condemned the failure to observe the Sharia—a grave sin in the eyes of the Jews—was by no means accepted as a Christian view without criticism.

Perun, the Slavic god of thunder and lightning—known as Perkunas in the Baltic region—was already known in the 6th century,²⁸ but, just like the Germanic god of smithing and craftsmanship, Donnar (Thor), he remained largely unnoticed at first. The Germans’ affairs of war were managed by Wotan (Odin in Scandinavia) and his son Tiyu.²⁹ However, these did not resemble Perun.

But when the impetus of passion swept through Scandinavia and the genetic drift brought winds of fame and indomitability to the southern shores of the Baltic Sea, the old type of god changed. By the 9th century, Perun had transformed into a stern, bloodthirsty and war-obsessed god. His western counterpart on the island of Rügen, Svyatovit, demanded that Danish and German captives be sacrificed to him. The eastern Perun began to behave in the same way. Indeed, when the blood of the captive sacrifices was not enough, he even demanded the blood of his own worshippers.³⁰

For the South Slavs, who were accustomed to Mithraic mysticism and Christian rites, these traits were extraordinary; but the northern princes and the Varangians had lost their standing in the capital, where their god was labelled the Devil.³¹ The conflict with the Roman Empire in the 4th century was renewed in Russia with at least the same intensity and ended with the same result: the victory of Christianity.

In the Russia that Svyatoslav had liberated, there was no question of unity. A war—whether bloody or bloodless—was raging both at the borders, in the cities, and even at the negotiating table. We might regard the latter as a local incident, but even that is no small matter. Both the Latin archbishops and the Greek priests, as well as the Slavs of Kiev—

28 PVL. H. II, pp. 324–325.

29 Veber, *General History*, IV/136–137.

30 PVL. H. II, pp. 58–59.

31 It should be borne in mind that ‘idolatry’ (literally, tribal cults) never presents a unified whole. These cults, even amongst themselves, exhibit no fewer—and perhaps even more—differences than the monotheistic world religions. Consequently, after the old question “Which god do you believe in?” was asked, it would have been appropriate to follow it up with a second question: “How do you believe?”, that is, in an orthodox or a heretical manner.

They had begun to penetrate the spirits of the Ross people's, and indeed Perun's, sacrifices. Muslim clerics, who had not been on the agenda until then, had also joined this movement. Although the spirit of the sorrowful and greedy Devil roamed the sun-drenched hills of Languedoc, the flower-filled fields of Lombardy, the deserts of the Sahara and Arabia, and the mountains of Iran and the Pamirs that stretch endlessly into one another, and even visited Ordos in the East—known as the 'endless light'—the idea of an anti-system representative had not even been conceived of.³² For the Devil had not yet made an appearance in Russia and Siberia in the 10th century. This was Svyatoslav Igorevich's first advantage.

However, this prince was unable to present his own people with positive programmes after securing a magnificent victory. On the contrary, it was the representatives of rival religions who were presenting the programmes here. Between you and me, the propaganda they carried out was actually quite a formidable undertaking.

For one thing, in matters of religion, as in other matters, there was no material gain. This was a matter of conscience, but in an ethnic context, conscience serves as an indicator of ethnic compatibility. They choose those among their friends who are sympathetic, yet they do not behave sincerely when discussing the issues.

Consequently, alongside the commercial activity between Kyiv and Constantinople, the security afforded by the political alliance between the two states did not serve as a pretext for religious intolerance, let alone religious persecution. The tolerance shown by the Slavic-Russians had spread widely during the period of the concept of genotheism, which advocated that every people (ethnos) should worship its own god and not interfere with other cults. Only the proselytising activities of the Christian religions could have shocked the pagans. Olga had been forced to conceal her baptism, yet the number of Christians in Kyiv was still growing. This was particularly true following the victory over Khazaria.

It could be said that it was the passionate people of Kiev, rather than the idle, who were Christians. For they had voluntarily filled the ranks of Svyatoslav's army, and up until that point, Orthodox clergy had been conducting services openly within the army. As the Byzantine Greeks were still their allies, the princes in particular were not pleased with this situation. The victim of the Greek-Russian alliance had to be the weakened Bulgaria, which had been a rival of Byzantium for 300 years.

32 Gumilev, L. N. *Staroburyatskaya jivopis*. Moscow, 1975, pp. 40–43.

60. Balance of Power

It has been suggested that it might have been more prudent for Svyatoslav to convert to Islam in order to maintain a foothold in the regions bordering the Khazars. I do not believe this to be the case. One can only rely on a powerful ally. By the 60s of the 10th century, however, the Caliph of Baghdad had lost his authority even within the country's borders, following the secession of the provinces and the spread of the Shi'ite movement—which had rallied people around itself in Iran, Africa, and even Arabia, which had fallen under the rule of the Qarmatians. There was no hope of finding allies in the East. Nor was there any in the West. The Hungarians had suffered a heavy defeat against the Germans in Poland in 955. Bulgaria had been weakened following the death of Tsar Simeon, as it was being eroded from within by the Bogomil anti-system, which could not be subdued. The alliance formed with the German ruler and Emperor Otto had yielded no benefits that might serve as an example to the Western Slavs; the Swedish government had paid dearly for its adoption of Catholicism, shedding rivers of blood as the Swedes resisted it as much as they could.

Nevertheless, Russia, surrounded on all sides by enemies, was in dire need of a strong ally. The victory over the Rahdanians was not a decisive one, but it had successfully altered Russia's situation and, in doing so, had demonstrated that the Russian army was both combative and capable. The Yahudi-Rahdanis still had a chance for revenge, and no one in Kiev was aware of this. Since the Russians could not buy friends with money, the only thing they could do was to act sincerely in their mutual relations and seek out parties who would take an interest in these ties. For this reason, Grand Duchess Olga sent Russian warriors to the Greeks; these warriors, fighting side by side with the Greeks, put an end to the Arab-Berber pirates' dominance in the Aegean Sea and restored Crete to the Byzantines.

In the 960s, the Byzantine Empire was the most powerful state. Its population stood at between 20 and 24 million.³³ These were shaped by traditions that had developed over many years—

33 Litavrin, G. G. *Byzantine Society and State in the 10th–11th Centuries*. Moscow, 1977, pp. 160–161. For the sake of comparison, I am providing the demographic data for the year 1000. (See Uralis, B. Ch. *Population Growth in Europe*. Moscow, 1941): France, 9 million; Italy, 5 million; Sicily, 2 million; Kievan Rus', 5.36 million (in 970, the population was less than half this figure); Poles, Lithuanians and Estonians, 1.6 million; the steppe stretching from the Don to the Carpathians, 0.48 million; England, 1.7 million in 1086.

It was organised and was always governed by a single centre—the Synod of Constantinople. However, the multitude of its enemies had deprived the Byzantine Empire of the initiative. It was constantly forced to defend itself or to regain what it had lost. In the east, it had recaptured Asia Minor, Northern Mesopotamia, Syria, the Grit and Cyprus; in the north, it had halted the Bulgarian invasion; and in the west, although it had lost Sicily, it had reclaimed Southern Italy by clashing with the German Emperor Otto I, who had ignored its warnings. Naturally, in such a tense environment, he no longer had the strength to pursue an active policy around the Black Sea. There, too, it was diplomacy—and to some extent ethnic ties—rather than armies that came into play.

Chersonesus was a wealthy and freedom-loving city. Its inhabitants had maintained friendly relations with the Pechenegs until their departure for the Western European steppes. They provided the Pechenegs with pomegranates, sweets, rare fabrics, pepper, leopard skins and other luxury goods; in return, the Pechenegs offered various services that could be purchased with gifts. “During the period when the Roman Emperor was allied with the Pechenegs, neither the Rus nor the Turks [Hungarians – L.G.] were in a position to risk war with the Romans. Indeed, they were not even in a position to demand large sums of money to maintain the peace between them... For if they [the Greeks – L.G.] were to go to war with the Romans, they feared that the Pechenegs, who maintained friendly relations with the emperor through the gifts and envoys sent, would easily attack the lands of the Rus’ and the Turks, enslave their women and children, and burn and destroy their countries.” “This also applied to the Bulgarians, who were ‘striving to maintain friendly ties and peace with the Pechenegs’.”³⁴ But the Guz people living along the Yayık River “had the strength to go to war with the Pechenegs.”³⁵

The Pechenegs, too, generally avoided fighting their neighbours, particularly the Rus’. This was because they sold their herds of cattle in these regions.³⁶ However, their efforts to maintain friendly relations with the Greeks had compelled them to establish contact not with the pagan Rus’—who were allies of the Normans—but with the Orthodox Christians. During a few years of peace, which were accompanied by brutal wars, the balance of power lay in this region. However, the cause of these wars lay not in the north, but on the southern shores of the Black Sea.

34 Constantine Porphyrogenetos, ‘O femax’ and ‘O narodax’, pp. 67–68.

35 Ibid., p. 75.

36 Ibid., p. 66.

Nikephoros II Phokas had come to power by staging a coup. The widowed empress, the beautiful Theophano, who was seeking a second husband from among the synod and the people of Constantinople, had also supported him. However, the emperor soon lost his reputation when he attempted to maintain the empire's borders at a cost that drained the state's coffers. Nikephoros, who paid regular salaries to the greedy soldiers, began to cut other expenses, dismissed ambitious high-ranking officials, elevated the obedient peasants, and started to protect the poor clergy at the expense of the wealthy monasteries and bishoprics. Bread prices in the capital had risen eightfold. Public discontent had grown like an avalanche, heralding the arrival of the most opportune moment for the opportunists who were never in short supply in the Byzantine Empire.

The regime, which relied on the army—or, more precisely, on the armoured cavalry, the finest element of the army—seemed unshakeable. Only one army could stand up to another, and 'Kalokiros, the cunning and insolent son of the commander of the Chersonesos garrison', had taken on this task.³⁷

61. What One Person Could Achieve in the ' '

The friendship established by Grand Duchess Olga between Kyiv and Constantinople was beneficial to both sides. Whilst as early as 949, 600 Russian warriors had landed at Grit, by 962 the Russians had fought alongside the Greek army against the Arabs in Syria. Kalokiros, who served in his own country's army, had also befriended them here and had even learnt Russian from his comrades-in-arms.³⁸

The people of Chersonesus had long tasted freedom and had even grown weary of ceaselessly squabbling with their rulers over it. Clashing with the Constantinopolitan authorities had become a daily preoccupation, perhaps even a habitual pattern of behaviour. Yet they could not sustain their lives without the metropolis and Constantinople. For from the Crimean port under Constantinople's control, wheat, dried fish, honey, beeswax and other colonial goods were brought to the capital—

37 Lev Diakonov, Book IV, pp. 61–63; Çertkov, A. *Description of the War of Grand Prince Svyatoslav Igorevich against the Bulgarians and Greeks*. Moscow, 1843.

38 Chertkov, *Description of the War...* p. 155.

The inhabitants of both cities had grown accustomed to one another and paid little heed to minor frictions. For this reason, when Nikephoros Phokas required a skilled diplomat who knew the Russian language, he sent him to Kiev in the capacity of a fully authorised patriarch.

This need arose in 966 when Nikephoros Phokas decided to cease paying tribute to the Bulgarians—who, under the 927 treaty, had been required to pay tribute to Byzantium in exchange for a commitment to prevent the Hungarians from crossing the Danube to plunder the imperial cities. For the Bulgarian khan, Peter, had broken the treaty by making peace with the Hungarians and had declared that he could not go back on his word. Nikephoros, who understood this message very well, had sent Kalokiros to Kiev with 15 kentari of gold. Kalokiros's task was to use this gold to persuade the Rus' to attack Bulgaria and force it to accept peace. This proposal had been delivered to Kyiv at the most opportune moment. Svyatoslav had only just returned from the campaign he had organised against the Vyatichi with his pagan comrades-in-arms. Now, the opportunity to don his boots had arisen once more. Olga's administration was over the moon.

Prince Svyatoslav was also pleased. This was because there were Christians within the Kyiv administration who certainly harboured no sympathy for him. He felt much more at ease during military campaigns. Consequently, in the spring of 968, Russian ships had reached the mouth of the Danube and the Russians had slaughtered the Bulgarians, who were not expecting an attack. The Russian army was not very large. It numbered approximately 8–10,000 men,³⁹ but Pecheneg cavalry had come to their aid. In August of the same year, the Russians defeated the Bulgarians near Dorostol; King Peter was killed, and Svyatoslav occupied Bulgarian territories stretching as far as Philippopolis [Filibe]. Naturally, he received great praise from the Greeks who traded with Russia for this success. Once again, in July 968, Russian ships had anchored in the harbours of Constantinople.

However, everything changed in the winter of 968/69. Kalokiros had reached an agreement with Svyatoslav, who was then at Pereyaslavets or Little Preslava on the Vrana coast, regarding his own accession to the Byzantine throne. Fortune was on their side. Nikephoros did not like Phokas—

39 Age, pp. 169–170; PVL. H. 22, p. 50.

40 There were two Preslavas in Bulgaria. One was Megalopolis on the banks of the Danube; the other was the smaller one, founded by Trajan and named Martsianopolis in honour of his sister Martsiana.

; the Rus, however, were brave, and a significant portion of the regular army was far away in Syria, engaged in fighting the Arabs. After all, in the past, in 705, the Bulgars had succeeded in placing the one-nosed Justinian II on the throne of the Blakhernai Palace under far worse conditions! Why shouldn't it be worth the risk?⁴¹

As for Svyatoslav, he too considered it pointless to return to Kyiv, where, at best, his Christian enemies would simply send him off somewhere else. Bulgaria bordered Russian territory, namely the region of the Uliches. Eastern Bulgaria, which had a coastline on the Black Sea and was a neighbour of Russia, had granted him a territory from which he could not escape the influence of his pagan mother and her advisers.

Let us now examine one by one those involved in the tragedy that was drawing ever closer. Svyatoslav represented not a rogue Viking in this conflict, but rather a level-headed, self-aware politician—a determined figure seeking a suitable place for himself in the capital. Seven hundred and thirty years later, Peter I would achieve the same thing with greater success, though at the cost of far more blood and sweat.

The region's economic needs were met with great care. Cloth, gold jewellery, fruit and wine came from Thrace; silver from Bohemia, horses from Hungary, and furs, honey and slaves from Russia. In short, everything needed to sustain the army. Perhaps engaging in conflict with the Byzantines was not part of the Russian prince's plans. After all, he had not set his sights on Greek territories; he had merely occupied a portion of the land belonging to Bulgaria, the Byzantines' enemy. Of course, one should have foreseen that Nikephoros Phokas would not welcome the Russian invaders. However, Svyatoslav also trusted Kalokiros on this matter. If he were to ascend the throne, he would surely repay his debt of gratitude to the Prince of Kiev. As for Kalokiros, his conscience was clear. For Byzantium, thanks to him, had recovered the territories it had lost to the Bulgars in the 7th century, and now it would be freed from Phokas's tyranny and become an ally of Russia. Those who would suffer if this plan succeeded were the emperor, the Bulgarian princes Boris and Roman Petrovich, and the Orthodox groups in Kiev.

Nikephoros Phokas was not sitting idly by either. He had learnt of the plot being hatched and had immediately taken the necessary precautions. In the autumn of 968, the

41 Kedren and Zanzara write: 'The instigator of these wars was Kalokiros...' Citing Çertkoff's aforementioned work.

Catapults had been positioned on the walls of Tantinopolis, and the harbour entrance had been blocked with chains. Greek diplomats had taken a proposal to Bulgaria to form an alliance by marriage, arranging for the sons of the late Emperor Roman Vasileus and Constantine to wed Bulgarian princesses. Furthermore, since the Hungarians and the Pechenegs on the right bank of the river were part of Svyatoslav's army, Greek agents were to persuade the Pechenegs on the left bank to launch a raid on Kiev. In truth, none of this was necessary for the Greeks, the Rus' or the Bulgars, but events had become inevitable due to Kalorikos's scheming.

62. 's Avalanche Cannon

In the spring of 969, the Pechenegs on the left bank laid siege to Kyiv. This came as a complete surprise to Olga and the people of Kyiv, as they had done nothing to provoke a breach of the peace. Kyiv was in a rather desperate situation, and the army that Voivode Pretič had brought to the left bank to come to the duchess's aid was not large enough to repel the enemy. However, when the Pecheneg commanders began negotiations with Pretič, it emerged that the war had been started by mistake. The Orthodox Christians standing by the Grand Duchess's side had no intention of going to war with Byzantium either. "Thus the Pechenegs left the city," yet they still would not drive their horses beyond the Lybid River. Upon this, Olga made a wise decision and summoned her son from Bulgaria. Svyatoslav set off immediately and arrived in Kyiv. Thus, the Pechenegs returned to the steppe and 'peace was restored.'

However, Svyatoslav was not welcomed with open arms in Kyiv. Nestor claims that he had a difficult character, but one must bear in mind just how tragic the situation had become. On 11 July, Olga had passed away and been buried according to Christian rites. However, even if people 'shed tears' at her grave, today it is not even known where she lies.

In other words, Olga had secretly converted to Christianity, and in Kyiv, the number of both Christians and pagans was quite high.

The chronicle makes no mention of what Svyatoslav did following his mother's death; or rather, it chooses to remain silent—

He was fleeing. However, subsequent events show that he did not simply leave Kiev; on the contrary, he was forced to leave and returned directly to his army, which was holding the Danube region under occupation. At the head of the army were commanders loyal to him: Sfenkel, Īkmor, Sveneld, etc. It should be noted that these are neither Slavic nor Christian names. On the contrary, they are all Rossomon names. This indicates which ethnic groups in Russia supported a pagan prince.

Olga's grandchildren had been installed on the princely thrones. Yaropolk to the throne of Kyiv; Oleg to the Drevlyan region; and Vladimir, son of Maluša the locksmith—who had been taken captive during the conquest of the Drevlyans—to Novgorod. This was because, due to the unruly nature of the Novgorodians, no one had wished to go there. However, no place could be found within his own realm for Svyatoslav himself. But this is not mere conjecture. Had Svyatoslav not been preparing to go to war with the Greeks in July 969, he would not have lost his throne. Had he felt that he stood on firm ground, he would have withdrawn his army from Bulgaria. But he did none of these things and... suffered great losses.

Empress Theophano had fallen in love with the handsome John Tzimiskes. On the night of 10–11 December, assassins aided by the empress entered the palace and brutally murdered Nikephoros Phokas. As soon as Tzimisces became emperor, he accused Theophano, who had risked her life for him, and all the assassins who had taken part in Phokas's murder. He distributed his own vast estates to peasants and lepers; he established festivals to ease the people's burdens and removed all of Phokas's supporters from their posts. Kalokiros and Svyatoslav's most significant advantage had thus been eliminated.

Svyatoslav dispatched his forces, comprising Hungarian and Bulgarian allies, to Thrace.⁴² When Bardas Skeleros, Tzimisces's chief commander, defeated these forces at Arkadiopolis [Lüleburgaz], the Hungarians returned to their homeland, whilst the Bulgarians returned to the Russians. Nevertheless, Svyatoslav dispatched an army to Macedonia in the winter of 970/71. His probable aim was to secure a bridgehead for the supporters of Kalokiros. However, not only did his objective fail to materialise, but worse still, the Bulgarians, incited by Greek agents, rebelled against the Russians. Svyatoslav had no choice but to return to Pereyaslavets. Leaving Sfenkel, Kalokiros and Prince Boris in command of the army there, he himself proceeded to the Lower Danube—

42 Çertkov, *Opisaniye voyını..* pp. 217–220.

where he took refuge in the city of Dorostol. This was situated at the point where Bulgaria's Uliç territories bordered.

Svyatoslav's new plan was entirely realistic. Having lost all hope of conquering the whole of Bulgaria and placing Kalokiros on the throne, he had decided to settle at the mouth of the Danube, close to the Russian border—a region that would not fall under Kievan control—and thus secure his position. Even if Bulgaria were to repel the Greek invasion and be re-established as an independent principality, the Danube basin would remain under pagan Russia. With these thoughts in mind, Svyatoslav set out, raising his voice as he had done before and demanding tribute, and began negotiations with Tzimiskes. However, John Tzimiskes was a skilled diplomat and, in his time, a capable commander-in-chief. Having spent the entire winter stalling the Russian prince, he launched an unexpected campaign against Svyatoslav in the spring of 971. Whilst 300 Greek ships, equipped with fire-throwing devices, advanced along the Danube, an army of 15,000 infantry and 13,000 cavalry set out overland, passing through regions in the Balkans that the Russians had failed to defend properly, and laid siege to Pereyaslavets. On the third day, the assault on the fortress ceased. A relatively small group of Russians, under the command of Sfenkel, carried out a sortie and joined the main forces. Kalokiros had gone with them. Prince Boris, however, surrendered to the Greeks. Tzimiskes celebrated Easter in the conquered city.

Following this incident, the whole of Bulgaria rose up in rebellion against Svyatoslav, who was besieging Dorostol with a handful of cavalry. The Greeks besieged the Russians by land and from the Danube, but the Russians fought so fiercely that only the charge of a cavalry regiment saved Tzimiskes from defeat. Ultimately, due to disease and heavy losses, Svyatoslav was forced to sign a peace treaty on the condition that the Russian ships be allowed to sail freely out of the blockaded Danube and that food be provided for his starving soldiers. Thus, in August 971, the Russians withdrew from Bulgaria.

63. 's Interpretation of the Events

Emotionalism leads to errors in science.

According to a widely accepted claim, after Tzimiskes allowed the Russians to leave Dorostol, he made an agreement with the Pechenegs to pursue them and put them to the sword. This view is a typical

prejudice. With 300 ships equipped with fire-throwing devices, why would there be any need to pay a fortune in gold to nomads who hired out their swords, when there was the opportunity to set fire to the wooden boats laden with wounded Russians as they sailed down the Danube towards the Dnieper estuary? A very cheap and radical view!

On the other hand, how could the Pechenegs have neglected their herding, haymaking and other duties from the autumn of 971 to the spring of 972, simply because they intended to put the Russian forces to the sword? Furthermore, if the Russians had reached Kiev on horseback via the Bug Valley—that is, through the lands of the Tverians—then all those expectations would have been in vain.

Finally, Kedren and Zonaras state that whilst Tzimiskes was eager to make a hasty peace, he also promised that they would leave Bulgaria—which had now become a Byzantine province—in peace, refrain from going to the Istros (Danube) and “allow the Rus’ to return to their ancestral lands via their own territory”, they claim that he offered the Pechenegs an alliance with Byzantium. Again, according to them, the Pechenegs accepted all the terms except the last one because they were “angry with the Russians for having made a treaty with the Romans”.⁴³ No! The Pechenegs are not such greedy savages as to hire out their swords to others for a few pennies! Clearly, they too had a political objective of which we are as yet unaware, and which we may perhaps learn of in the future. Therefore, whilst exonerating Tzimiskes from the baseless accusation of betraying Svyatoslav, let us examine the truths that escaped the notice of our predecessors and the connections that remained unnoticed due to the failure to scrutinise these truths.

For one thing, the Pechenegs were weaker than the Russians. Their federation, which controlled a vast territory, was in reality defenceless against the regular armies of Byzantium and the *druzhinas* of the Kievan princes. Whilst living as nomads on the steppe, they did not object to the Russians’ claims to the lands along the Black Sea coast, nor did they disrupt trade with the Greeks.⁴⁴ Furthermore, according to Ibn Hawqal’s account from 969, the Pechenegs, facing the Russians’ sharp swords and their allies—

43 Ibid., pp. 112–113.

44 Belyayev, I. *On the northern coast of the Black Sea and the adjacent steppes prior to the Mongol occupation of this region*// Proceedings of the Odessa Society of History and Antiquities. 1853. Vol. 3, pp. 10–11.

he states. As for the Pechenegs' alliance with the Greeks, Constantine Porphyrogenitus touches upon this matter. Consequently, the reason why the Pechenegs took a hard line not against the Russians but against Svyatoslav must be sought in the nearby major centre of Kyiv.

It has already been emphasised that the Kievan people's attitude towards Svyatoslav was two-sided. On the one hand, he was a prince and a hero; on the other hand, however... Here are a few lines from the chronicles: "He loved foreigners and killed his own people" (Uvarovskaya Chronicle); "He favoured foreigners and slaughtered his own people" (Yermolinskaya Chronicle); "He would give his life for foreigners, whilst his own people feared to approach him" (Lwowskaya Chronicle); and finally, a reproach to Svyatoslav, abandoned by the Kyivans: "You, O prince! You roam foreign lands, consorting with foreigners; yet you abandon your own country to its fate".⁴⁵ Herein lies the explanation of where Svyatoslav's true enemies lay. For his enemies were not in Constantinople, as later generations might have wished to believe regarding this venerable prince.⁴⁶

It should also be noted that many of the people of Kyiv, who held Grand Duchess Olga in the highest regard, had good reason to adopt a negative attitude towards her son. They knew him very well.

64. Emerging from the Darkness:

In the final days of the battles before the walls of Dorostol, after the great warrior Ikmor had fallen and all hope of victory had faded, the Russians emerged onto the banks of the Danube one moonlit night. First, they gathered their dead and burned them on a bed of hemp stalks. Once the cremation ceremony was over, they killed many of the male and female captives. But the most peculiar thing here was that they drowned the large-breasted young women and roosters by plunging them into the waters of the Danube.⁴⁷ Thus, they completed the ritual of offering a sacrifice to the wrathful god.

Even more horrific events took place in Beloberejye (the Berezan Islands) after their return from Bulgaria. The Prince and the pagan military council,

⁴⁵ РЛ. II. 22, p. 319.

⁴⁶ Pașuto, *Vineșnaya*, p. 08.

⁴⁷ Lev Diakon. 9th century; Chertkov, *Description of the War*, p. 85.

They accused the Russian Christians fighting alongside them of the same cause, claiming that the other gods were angered by the Christians' belief in one God and that this was why they had been defeated. Svyatoslav punished his brother Uleb and those under his command by subjecting them to torture until death, accusing them of abandoning their comrades who had been wounded in battle and therefore needed a doctor rather than an executioner. Clergymen present in the Russian army who preached to the Orthodox Russians suffered particularly severe torture.

Until 971, Svyatoslav had been a man of religious tolerance and great generosity. But whatever happened, after the defeat, that magnanimous prince was gone, and a completely different man took his place. Perhaps it was the psychological impact of a defeat he had never before experienced, or the grief caused by his mistakes, that led to this. His intellectual views also changed; he sent a decree to Kiev ordering the burning of churches, and further vowed to kill all Russian Christians for having renounced their faith.⁴⁸

Following this incident, Svyatoslav became convinced that a plot had been hatched against him. The surviving Christians and Voivode Sveneld fled to the steppes of Kiev. The Pechenegs turned a blind eye to their passage. However, in the spring of 972, whilst Svyatoslav was retreating by river with his loyal pagan soldiers, the Pechenegs attacked at a shallow crossing and slaughtered the entire Russian force.

Here, we propose versions that are more plausible than the one found in the 'Chronicle of Nestor'. This is because Nestor does not explain why the Kievan Rus' did not come to the aid of Svyatoslav's army, which was starving in Beloberejye, despite the Bug steppe route being open. Someone must have informed the Pechenegs of when and at which shallow crossing Svyatoslav would pass. Otherwise, they could not have gathered their full forces at that point. These could not have been the Pereyaslavets, that is, the Preslav Bulgars, as they did not possess such information. For their lands had already been occupied by the Greeks. In this situation, the Kievan Rus' people, who did not want Svyatoslav and his wild soldiers to march into the city, had meddled in the affair, and it was easy for them to establish contact with the Pechenegs. Indeed, Voivode Pretič, with the Pecheneg commanders, perhaps we—

48 Tatišchev, V. N.'s **Istoriya Rossiyskaya**, in the **Chronicle of Bishop Ioakim**. Vol. I, Part I, Moscow, 1768, p. 36; Chertkov, **Opisaniye voyny**, p. 105.

He was exchanging weapons with Zat Küre or one of his friends.

Nestor later notes that the Rus' people were buying horse meat in Beloberejye for 'half a grivna per head'. Who else but the Pechenegs could have sold them horse meat? If this is the case, then Svyatoslav's war with the Kure did not take place immediately, but only after another event that Nestor chose to remain silent about. In short, Nestor's version does not seem capable of resolving these contradictions without Ioakim's version, which also explains the subsequent conflicts. Both Svyatoslav's *druzhina* and the end of the old Slavic pagan faith were tied to his death. It may seem strange, but pagans were present throughout the country, and a significant portion of Kiev was also pagan. So, if that was the case, why was such behaviour exhibited? Because the most passionate and devoted adherents of the old faith remained within Svyatoslav's circle. Their death meant the loss of the initiative held by the Kyiv Christians surrounding Prince Yaropolk. Although Slavic paganism attempted to regain its lost position on several further occasions, to no avail. These pagan beliefs, such as the Maslenitsa flatbread, fortune-telling, and the fear of dark places, were preserved in their primitive form until the 20th century; however, they hold no significance for ethnogenesis.

Now let us consider what might have happened had Svyatoslav defeated the Kievan Rus'. Kiev would likely have been transformed from a wealthy and cultured city into a castle inhabited by bandit knights, much like Branniy Bor (now Brandenburg), or into a base for pirates devoted to the cult of Svyatovit, as was the case on Ruga Island; the Russians would have met the same fate as the Lutichs, Bodrichs and Pomorians, who squandered their passionate energy in constant warfare with their neighbours. For these Slavs, it was not just the Germans and Danes, but all their neighbours who were regarded as enemies. Yet a man cannot live without friends.

Of course, one had to choose one's friends, but at that time Svyatoslav had no alternative but to choose either the Orthodox or the Muslims. For the Kievan Rus' had categorically rejected Catholicism; hopes pinned on Perun, meanwhile, had led to defeat. In contrast, the Islamic world was also undergoing a serious crisis between 970 and 972. The Caliph of Baghdad had lost Egypt, which had been seized by the Fatimids in 969, and subsequently Syria and Northern Mesopotamia, which had been recaptured by the Byzantines,

had slipped from his grasp. Now the Caliph himself was in need of aid and was deriving no benefit from his allies.

Nevertheless, what Russia needed was unity. The breaking point of the intense tension was linked to the foreign occupier, which led to the loss of more lives than in other circumstances. Yet Russia possessed more than enough strength to ensure its reconstruction. It merely needed to decide how to go about it. However, as was often the case, there was no concept of unity in Russia.

65. The Founding of the Empire

When you find yourself in a dead end, the wisest thing to do is to turn back to the junction and take another route. Here, the dead-end street was, I suppose, entering into conflict with Byzantium. For as a result, the country had been split in two: Orthodoxy on one side, and a militant paganism driven by the triumphant Catholicism sweeping in from Sweden and Denmark to the east. Consequently, in Russia there was neither peace, nor unity of purpose, nor any spiritual ideal to speak of.

From 977 to 980, the Russian lands stretching from Ladoga to Kiev knew no peace or tranquillity. The cause of this instability was not solely the personalities of the princes. After all, the princes were young men backed by capable individuals, soldiers and politicians. Those who swore allegiance to Yaropolk favoured peace with Byzantium, an alliance with the Pechenegs, and the spread of Orthodoxy. The people of Kyiv also supported this faction; the borderland inhabitants, weary of fighting the Yatvags of Polotsk and Turov, had also turned towards them.

The Novgorodians, who saw Svyatoslav's son, the young Vladimir, as useful for their own ends, and the Drevlians, who favoured Maluša's son, were opposed to them. There was plenty of money in Novgorod, meaning they could afford to hire the Varangians. Worse still, along with the Varangians, furious gods such as Perun (Perkunas) had come to Russia and demanded human sacrifices in exchange for the promise of victory. These furious gods had fulfilled their promise by orchestrating a betrayal at Rodnya Fortress in 980. Prince Yaropolk was stabbed during negotiations with Vladimir; the latter thus became Prince of Kiev. However, the treachery, a fascinating

Moreover, Vladimir betrayed the Varangians; not only did he fail to pay them for their services, but he sent them all to the Greek army. Of course, he had first sent them a secret message, informing them that these newcomers were bandits who must be dispersed among the troops, otherwise they would cause unrest.

Vladimir's act towards the Varangians was pure treachery, yet it was only after this that the people of Kiev agreed to recognise him as prince and wholeheartedly supported (for the umpteenth time!) the conquest of the Slavic tribes. The Chervenians were subjugated in 981, the Vyatichs in 981–82, the Yatvags in 983, and the Radimichs in 984. In 985, a major war began against the Kama Bulgars and the Khazars.⁴⁹

Despite the support of the Guz (Turkic) cavalry units, the war against the Kama Bulgars was unsuccessful. After the 'victory', Vladimir's uncle Dobrynya, who was in command of the army, made a peculiar decision: the Bulgars who wore boots would not pay taxes; seek out boot-makers! A perpetual peace treaty was concluded with the Bulgars, meaning that Vladimir's administration had recognised the independence of the Kama Bulgars.

Fortunately, the war against the Khazars had ended in victory. Iakov the Monk (whose name appears among the chroniclers of 1074) wrote: 'Victory was won over the Khazars and a tribute was imposed upon them'.⁵⁰ Mukaddesî, who completed his work in 988–89, also provides information regarding these events. That year, Volga Khazaria had been occupied by the armies of the Khorezmian ruler Ma'mun. However, as there was no conflict with the Russians, it must be assumed that Vladimir's victims were remnants of the Jewish-Khazar state. Following this event, Tmutarakan became a Russian city in 988 and was used as a residence by Prince Mstislav Vladimirovich.⁵¹ Mstislav was less than six years old when he was enthroned as prince, but this was of no consequence. For in that era, the principality was merely a ceremonial office, and the true rulers were always behind the scenes, though their names have not gone down in history.

The proposed version differs from that accepted by M. I. Artamonoff. This is because this version highlights Russia's relations with Derbent in a later period and the Russian naval raids on Shirvan—

⁴⁹ Artamonov, *Xazar*, pp. 434–435.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 435.

⁵¹ *PL. H. 2*, p. 83.

had they not dominated the North Caucasus, they could not have maintained their presence. For the lower reaches of the Volga had come under the rule of the Khorezmians first, and subsequently the Guz. It appears that the Russian army, having established a base at Tmutarakan, was launching attacks along the Kuban towards the Caspian Sea and the Terek.

If the people of Upper Kuban—the Kasogs (Circassians)—had managed to keep themselves sufficiently removed from the conflict between Mstislav and Prince Rededya (Redede)⁵² and the famous battle mentioned in the ‘Tale of Igor’s Campaign’, then the Terek Khazars might also have remained silent. Semen-der had been ravaged by Svyatoslav’s warriors, and “nothing was left for the poor to eat in the vineyards and pomegranate groves... neither pomegranates nor grapes remained”.⁵³ This destruction must have compelled the Khazars to adopt a hard line against the Russians, and this was likely the case. However, as the situation in Russia had changed completely by the end of the 10th century, it was no longer possible for them to come to terms with the Terek Khazars. After converting to Christianity, Russia had put an end to its hostility towards the Orthodox Khazars in the Semender region. In the 10th century, religious differences were far more significant than ethnic ones. This was because affiliation to a religion determined membership of one super-ethnos or another. Within the super-ethnos itself, however, agreement was always possible.

Here is an explanation of why the choice of religion was so crucial at that time. However, it would be wrong to assume that this choice was made solely on the basis of political or economic considerations. No, as an individual could restrain themselves from adopting another’s religion, it was impossible to force people to accept the enemy’s religion. In other words, the principle of ‘cemile’ (compliment) – which superseded the conscious decisions of princes or kings – played the primary role in the adoption of a new religion. This choice arises freely at the individual level. At the population (ethnic) level, however, it is determined by psychological factors, traditions, memories of recent historical events, and the level of passionate tension within the system. The latter depends on the stage of ethnogenesis or the age of the ethnic group.

52 Lopatinskiy, A. G. *Mstislav Tmutarakanskiy and the Rededya according to Circassian legends*//Proceedings of Baku State University. Vol. 1, Part 2. Baku, 1921, pp. 23–26.

53 Karaulov, N. A. *Information from 9th–10th-century Arab geographers on the Caucasus*, Armenia and Azerbaijan//Collection of Materials for the Description of Localities and Tribes of the Caucasus. Vol. 38. Tiflis, 1908, p. 114; Artamonov, *Khazar*, p. 445.

Since this is the case, the explanation for Russia's adoption of Christianity in 986–989 cannot be provided by referring to events of the 'recent past'. However, perhaps the matter can be resolved through a comprehensive comparison of the characteristic features of the world's four major religions: Orthodoxy, Catholicism, Judaism and Islam. To these four religions, the Baltic-Scandinavian Perun cult—revived on the basis of a pagan worldview—could be added as a fifth. In the second half of the 10th century, the wars in Western Eurasia were not driven by the aim of securing land, wealth or political dominance, but rather by the religious beliefs of the Slavs and Turks. And these wars determined the fate of the peoples of Eastern Europe and the Great Steppe for the following five hundred years.

Since theological and philosophical debates fall within the realm of cultural history rather than physical geography, an explanation of their role and significance can be provided by applying a different method based on V.I. Vernadsky's third principle of biochemistry: 'The mind does not create a form of energy; rather, it brings about the effect for which it assumes responsibility.'⁵⁴ This is a paradox, but its validity will become clear from the analysis of theological problems linked to the fact of Russia's Christian identity.

54 Vernadsky, V. I. *Himičeskoye stroyeniye...* p. 272.

XI. RELIGIONS WAR

66. The Right to Choose

For an individual to convert to a different religion constitutes a major psychological rupture; but when an entire people (ethnos) with established cultural and way-of-life traditions converts en masse, this rupture is many times greater. Nevertheless, the replacement of pagan cults with world religions has occurred everywhere, albeit with varying details of the process. The process of Christianisation in Russia was particularly protracted. This was because Christian propaganda faced opposition not only from the regional beliefs of the Slavs—concerning forest, water and household spirits, as well as vampires that would not leave the spirits of the dead in peace—but also from neighbouring rival religious doctrines that had established themselves within world culture. This hostility did not manifest itself solely in religious debates or competition over doctrine and activities; it also escalated into direct armed conflict. For the human soul is inextricably bound to the body.

It is therefore essential to move away from the traditional method of recounting events in exhaustive detail, and instead first present the true nature of the process to the reader as a whole (the first approach), then outline the struggle against the Orthodox, and only then depict the conflict that led to pagan Russia becoming the greatest patron of Orthodoxy. In this drama, the baptism of the Kyivans in 988 is the most intense scene. However, the introductory and concluding sections are also of considerable importance for understanding the event, which is the aim of a scientific study. Therefore, starting from the very beginning, let us reach our goal by ‘climbing the steps one by one’, so as not to overlook anything or fall into error.

By the first millennium AD, Christianity had spread to all countries from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean. However, the actual

did not unfold in the same way as described in the parable of the sower (Luke 8:5–15). According to this account in Luke, the seeds that fell by the wayside were trampled underfoot and became food for the birds; those that fell on rocky ground sprouted but withered away from lack of water; and those that fell among thorns were choked by the thorns as they grew alongside the shoots.

In this analogy, different individuals—that is, the personal level—have been taken into account. At the population level, however, a rather apt observation has been made. Even if, instead of an individual passing through the stages of childhood, adulthood and old age, we were to consider an *ethnos* undergoing the stages of *ethnogenesis*—such as ageing in the ‘akmatic’ phase accompanied by ‘passioner’ (excessive fervour), a breakdown in the ‘atâlet’ phase, and a subsequent transition to the ‘homeostasis’ phase—the overall picture would remain unchanged in principle. One must simply take into account the dynamism of geographical factors, changes in climatic conditions, and the *ethnogenetic* explosions resulting in the dissipation of passionate tension. To put it metaphorically, at the moment of the explosion, the path changes direction; the thorns wither; a layer of humus forms upon the rocks; and the conditions necessary for the seed to sprout take on different forms.

This is why faiths have become divided within themselves. Moreover, this division has sometimes led to complete isolation (as in Islam), sometimes to the disruption of discipline by dogmatists (the Rafidites), and sometimes to the fragmentation of the churches. The causes of this phenomenon must be sought not in religions, but in human beings, in their characters, and in the succession of generations that have changed beyond recognition. However, all of these are, in themselves, neutral natural changes; that is, they are neither good nor bad. Good and evil are phenomena that develop over time following the emergence of human consciousness and the subsequent brutalisation of behaviour towards the natural environment that surrounds them. Let us clarify this thesis.

Beliefs are not all of equal value. Even the paths leading to salvation are some straight, some narrow, and some crooked and winding. This depends not only on the content of dogmas, but also on the moral fabric of society. The latter, in turn, is linked to the system’s level of passion, that is, to the stage of *ethnogenesis*. The soul’s attainment of peace comes through repentance—or, more precisely, through reflecting with sound judgement on the deeds committed and their motivations. This, however, is only possible at a high boiling point. Where the embers have cooled, there is no passionate energy for original creativity.

Nor does the mere direction of behavioural impulses lead to salvation. Everywhere we see evidence of the power of nature on the one hand, and atheism on the other. These are no less powerful than religion. This is known as the 'zero reference point'. Even if idol-worshippers do not regard the geographical environment as the work of the Creator, they treat nature and culture with humanity.

Consequently, those who detest the beauty of the world and the diverse forms of life within it refer to these as 'repugnance'. The Manichaeans' Light, the Gnostics' Pleroma, the Kabbalists' En-Sof (Eternal and Infinite Nothingness), and the "Divine Darkness" – as described by certain Scholastics, who in the Middle Ages attributed the function of Lucifer to photons and which is now termed the vacuum in theoretical physics – are examples of this kind. No pity is shown to those who follow the void. Nor is any help offered to them. For it is impossible to live in peace with them. People in the Middle Ages thought this way, and they had their reasons for such assessments. For they had clashed with the representatives of the anti-system and had come to understand what to expect from them.

In the 9th and 10th centuries, people had adopted a dualistic belief system based on the notion of a great, creative God and a rebellious Satan. The debate centred on which was the better option: a life full of hardships, or suicide?

People of the Middle Ages were not cowards. To remain untouched by the intoxication of victory, to face humiliation, or to sacrifice one's life for one's own views and principles—to face death—were all commonplace for them. After all, they went to war willingly, and that is why they were victorious. Consequently, escaping the ugliness of life was a matter of perspective for them. They could regain what they had lost through the joy they felt. There was no imperative impulse driving them to join a sect or a Manichaean community. However, since it is not the entirety of all ethnic groups, but only a certain number of people living in that geography, within those socio-economic patterns, and playing no role other than melting into the same pot, who join this community, then one must accept that the shift from positive to negative in the vector of activity is a result of human free will. If this is the case, those who make this choice also bear the moral and legal responsibility for these actions. In other words, they become ordinary believers, not criminals. Although people understood this, they still chose collective conversion, knowing full well that they would not be pitied.

However, it is also interesting to note that, although monism underwent a serious crisis almost everywhere in the 9th century, the Rafizī movements—which influenced a large section of the population—emerged only at the borders of the newly formed or residual super-ethnic groups. To give a geological example, these movements, having settled by creating wide fissures between the paving stones, led to the cultures of the ethnic groups—which had split into separate factions—developing in distinct directions. The fact that these ‘fissures’ were filled, despite the divisions between them, by movements such as Paulicianism, Bogomilism and Albigensianism in Christian countries, and Kharijism and Ismailism in Islamic countries, constituted the general trends emerging during this period. The Eastern counterparts of these religious teachings were Uighur Manichaeism¹ and Tangut Buddhism². However, as they had no direct connection with Russia, we shall not dwell on them.

As this phenomenon was based on a purely dualistic worldview, it had not affected the northern peoples—the Slavs and Mongols. In their view, there was a war between the White God and the Black God, and they knew that the latter did not engage in the bloody wars they had made the basis of their own philosophy of life, but rather, just as in ancient Mithraism, dealt as much as possible in treachery and lies.³

It is likely that they were closer to early Christianity than others. Indeed, the Poles had easily adopted Christianity from Rome, the Russians from Constantinople; their neighbours, the Mongols (Kerait, Nayman, Öngüt, etc.), had adopted it from Baghdad, where the Nestorian patriarch resided.⁴

67. Dualism

It appears that the Islamic religion—strict monism—rejected all forms of dualistic ethical interpretations more strongly than metaphysical ones. However, there was a way out here too, and it involved a rebellion that encompassed a detail of great significance.

1 Gumilëv, *The Ancient Turks*, pp. 381–386, 427–428.

2 Gumilëv, *Old Buryat Painting*, pp. 40–43.

3 Gumilev, L. N.; Kuznetsov, B. I. *Bon*.

4 Gumilëv, *Imaginary*, p. 106.

According to the Qur'an, Iblis was an angel created from fire, but when Allah created Adam, He commanded all the angels to prostrate themselves before him. Iblis refused, saying, "I am superior to him. You created me from fire and him from clay" (Qur'an. M., 1963, 7, 11).

Thus, Iblis emerged from among those who obeyed Allah, becoming an invisible being capable of assuming various forms and leading people astray from the right path. However, one must not confuse him with the countless impure spirits of nature or the souls of sinners. Ifrits, ghouls, albasts and the like are regarded as beings entirely of this world. Whereas Satan, by rebelling against God, tempted Adam and Eve and effectively made them disobedient to God. Here, a question arises: Since Allah is the All-Powerful, why did He tolerate Iblis's deeds? Moreoever, until the Day of Judgement, the unbelievers will prevail, and when the Dajjal appears, everything will become even worse. This is an anti-Christ apocalypse. The Dajjal will destroy the faith, blaspheme against Allah, and praise Satan. However, his end will come at the hands of the Prophet Jesus, who will descend from heaven—that is, Jesus the Messiah. Forty years later, the Day of Judgement will occur. When the world is destroyed, not even a trace will remain of Satan, who will be reduced to nothingness. As it appears, the principle of the world's duality lies beneath the veil of monism.

According to the prevailing view, Islamic doctrine is 'far from being original' because it was shaped by the influence of other monotheistic religions.⁵ However, the uncritical adoption of this view, which is put forward as if it were an established fact, leads to a lack of respect for a widely accepted tradition and, at the same time, to a departure from the truth. R.R. Mevlutoff writes that Allah "resembles the Jews' Yahweh and, despite the Muslims' rejection of the Trinity, the Christians' Lord and Father very closely".⁶ What is the general similarity here?

To identify the parallels, one must recall the role of Satan—created from fire—in the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise. The Book of Genesis mentions the Cherubim guarding the entrance to Eden with a 'flaming sword' (Genesis 3:24). This angel carried out the command of Yahweh

* The author's inconsistent views on Islam, such as this one, stem either from a lack of thorough study of the religion or from the influence of Christian belief. Consequently, one should not attach importance to such views on Islam held by a Christian. (trans.)

5 See the Qur'an. Appendix, p. 654.

6 Mevlutov, R. R. *Islam*. Moscow, 1974, p. 29.

brings. Then the same Yahweh speaks to Moses from within a burning bush on Mount Sinai (Exodus 3:2–5) and guides the Israelites out of Egypt within a pillar of fire during their exodus. (Exodus 13:21) Later, he descends to the earth amidst fire at Sinai (Exodus 19:18). In this context, the Egyptians' slaughter of the Jews—killing the male children whilst sparing the girls, and putting the people of Palestine to the sword along with their women and children—was carried out not by God but by Satan in disguise; therefore, the Egyptian people were not to blame. Muhammad was a man who shook the very foundations of all teachings, and he had attributed to Satan the attribute of being created from fire. However, the scientific level of the 7th century was not capable of realising that the Satan created from fire was Yahweh. And this Satan could certainly not be a God similar to the Father in the Trinity.

The religion of the Old Testament—the recognition of Yahweh as the God of the Jewish people—first flourished, then declined on the eve of the Christian era, after which the Jews developed Talmudism, a completely distinct philosophy. However, it is quite clear from the Pentateuch and the Psalms, as well as other sections of the Old Testament, to whom the Old Testament is addressed. Indeed, Jesus Christ had debated these texts with the Pharisees in the temple at Galilee. For 'the Jews were seeking to kill him' (John 7:1).

The reason for this hatred was primitive: as recounted in John: 'Jesus said, "If you were Abraham's children, you would do what Abraham did." But now you are trying to kill me—the one who has told you the truth that I heard from God. You are doing the works of your father.' 'We were not born of fornication,' they said. 'We have one Father, and he is God.'" (John 8:39, 41). Thus, all the Jews began to regard themselves as "sons of God", seeing him not as the God of other nations, but as their God alone. Jesus replied: "Jesus said, 'If God were your Father, you would love me.' 'For I have come from God. I have not come of my own accord; he sent me. Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. You are of your father the Devil, and you wish to carry out your father's desires. He has been a murderer from the beginning. He has not stood by the truth, for there is no truth in him. It is natural for him to lie.'" (John 8:42–44)

The accusation had been formulated quite clearly: Jesus described the Jews' Yahweh as the Devil whom he had cast out from his side whilst he was wandering about on a mission in the desert

This was none other than the Devil created from fire, who spoke to Moses (John 9:29), as confirmed by the Sadducees and the Pharisees. Consequently, a Christian could not choose between the Old Testament and the New Testament, or between the Devil and God. Accepting Yahweh as God did not mean leaving Christianity, but the matter was resolved after the formula of the Trinity was recognised at the Council of Nicaea. For Yahweh was one.

In the 10th century, both Eastern religions—Christianity and Islam, which shared similarities in many aspects of belief and ritual—were in agreement that Satan was the enemy of God. Both were dualistic. Christians and Muslims prayed to the same God; yet their forms of worship differed;⁷ the Jews, however, worshipped a different god. The latter had kept religious discussions separate from Judaism by prioritising business dealings. Between us, this suited both sides just fine.

...

Anyway, let us now set aside this complex issue and its contradictions, and return to Kyiv, which determined the fate and cultural trajectory of the ancient Russian people following Svyatoslav's death.

68. The Choice of Religion

The “Chronicle of Nestor” contains a didactic tale concerning Prince Vladimir's choice of religion in 986. The source of this tale's plot is clear. For a similar tale also appears in “The Letter of King Joseph”, and that too was borrowed from somewhere. However, this does not mean that there are no historical elements in the chronicle's account.⁸ So what was there?

Vladimir had seized the golden throne of Kyiv by brute force; yet, whilst expanding the borders of his state, he faced opposition from both his neighbours and his own subjects—

7 Pope Gregory VII wrote in a letter sent to al-Nasir of the Hammadi dynasty in North Africa in 1076: ‘Although we differ from one another, you and I believe in the same God’ (*Istoriya diplomatii*. M., 1959, p. 150). The Pope was aware of the doctrinal similarities between Catholicism and Islam, but people worshipped God, not doctrines, and this was the only valid system of the 10th–11th centuries.

8 Cochlin, Augustin. *Societies of Thought and Democracy*.

He had made many enemies along the way. To hold on to power, one needed both strength and popularity. He had the former, but the latter was lacking. In particular, in religions where setting aside personal interests is met with sympathy, the sincerity required was absent. Friends bought with money are considered dangerous. For they will sell you out the moment someone comes along willing to pay a little more.

Vladimir's astute advisers had realised this. In particular, they had reviewed the increasingly precarious state of foreign policy following two failed campaigns against Bulgaria—one led by Svyatoslav against the Danube and the other by Dobrynya against the Kama. The question of allies had become of the utmost importance. This problem was to be resolved through the adoption of one foreign religion or another, which would play a role in political programmes. However, the issue of permanent loyalty was complicating matters; without it, there could be no trust, and consequently, no allies. Therefore, it was necessary to select a programme that would be acceptable to both the subjects and the rulers, as well as to one of the most powerful neighbours.

The wrathful Baltic gods – although Orthodoxy had not yet become the official state religion, it had found a place among them ^{from 864 onwards} – did not please the Kievan Rus'. For this reason, missionaries from various places had once again begun to roam Kievan Rus'. Greeks from the south, Bulgarians from the east and Germans from the west. The Prince, however, was listening to them all. For a wrong choice could cost him his life and his throne. He had to tread carefully.

Vladimir had rejected Islam because it forbade the drinking of wine. The Prince was not personally an alcoholic; but even if he did not drink enough to get drunk, he greatly enjoyed gatherings where alcohol was present, enough to get a little tipsy. The rejection of this tradition was interpreted as meaning he would lose the friendships he so desperately needed.

As previous close contacts had not yielded positive results, Vladimir was absolutely unwilling to associate with the Catholics. Archbishop Adalbert's earlier visit to Olga and her refusal to convert to the Latin faith likely played a part in this stance. Perhaps the events that subsequently unfolded in Italy and had a profound impact across Europe also played a role.

In the 9th century, Sicily and Southern Italy formed part of the Byzantine Empire. However, the Berbers took the initiative in the western part of the Caliphate

9 Or from 867 onwards. See Golubinskiy, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 51–52.

No sooner had they wrested it from the Arabs than they launched an offensive across the entire Mediterranean. Sicily, just as it had been for fifteen hundred years between the Greeks and the Carthaginians, had now been the scene of bloody wars for two hundred years. But now the opposing sides were evenly matched, and moreover, a third power—Rome—had become involved in this struggle under the leadership of the German King Otto II, who, at the imperial diet convened in Verona in 983, had agreed with his subjects to launch a war against the Greeks and Saracens.

This incident demonstrates that, as late as the end of the 10th century, Western Catholics in the ‘Christian World’ regarded the Greek Heretics as ‘foreign’ to them, just as they did Muslims. This was merely the beginning of their growing estrangement from one another. Indeed, a century later, the knights would set out on a crusade to the East, declaring “God wills it”, and now, here too, the feudal lords had agreed, saying “Otto II wills it”. But fundamentally, there was no difference.

The Kievan diplomats understood very well that it was impossible to act in concert with the Greek and Latin sides. For this reason, they refused to participate in this tedious and unnecessary squabbling, and this situation prevented any praise of the Greek faith from appearing in the chronicles. Nevertheless, the same chronicles contain a brief dialogue with the Khazar Jews. I quote the text verbatim:

“... The Khazar Jews came and said: ‘We have heard that the Bulgars and the Christians have come to you. Each intends to teach you their own religion. The Christians believe in the man whom we crucified. We, however, believe in the one God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.’ Vladimir asked: ‘What does your law entail?’ They replied: ‘Circumcision, abstaining from pork and rabbit meat, and observing the Sabbath as a holy day.’ He asked again: “Where is your country?” They replied: “In Jerusalem.” He asked again: “Is it certain that it is there?” And they replied: “God was angry with our forefathers and scattered us to various countries because of our sins. He gave our lands to the Christians.” Upon this, Vladimir said: “You speak of a different faith, yet you yourselves have been cast out by God and scattered to the four winds. If God had loved you and your law, you would not have been scattered to other lands. Do you wish the same thing to happen to us?”¹⁰

10 The text is taken from D. S. Lihachev’s translation. (PVL . H. 22, p. 258).

The text was written in the 12th century. However, Palestine was under Arab control in the 10th century, and the Crusaders had ruled Jerusalem between 1099 and 1187. But that is not the point. The text documents the attempts by the Khazar Jews to seize the Kievan Khaganate, just as they had done in the Volga region. The Russians immediately opposed the Khazar proposal at that time; however, the shrewd Slavs acted with greater foresight than the Turks in matters of religion and opted for an alliance with the harmless Greeks across the sea.¹¹

It is clear that Muslim and Jewish delegations arrived before the war against the Bulgars and Khazars, that is, before the beginning of 985, but if one considers that the Russian army took part in suppressing Phokas Bardas's rebellion in Asia Minor in 987, it follows that the successful campaign against the Bulgars and the unsuccessful campaign organised for the conquest of the North Caucasus took place between the end of 985 and 986. Following these wars, the Judeo-Khazars were incorporated into the Russian state. Naturally, not as rulers in the eyes of the newly converted princes, but merely as ordinary citizens in one of the frontier towns of the Tmutarakan Principality. The person who would hold their fate in his hands was Vladimir's seventh son, Mstislav.

69. The Voice of Conscience

The issue of the preference for the Greek religion is addressed in Nestor's chronicle in a manner that is partly biased, partly fanciful, but in any case superficial. In the 10th–11th centuries, Islam was, in fact, a religion that did not drink wine,

11 The reliability of this text concerning the choice of religion has been scrutinised on numerous occasions (see Golubinskiy, Y. Y., *History of the Russian Church*), though naturally from the perspective of 19th-century textual interpretation. In traditional historiography, there was a tendency to treat dialogue as a literary device within a broader narrative. On this basis, there is no doubt that the chronicler made his assessment of the balance of power in the 10th century entirely on his own initiative. The issue of choosing any of the foreign religions is also addressed in the work by the 13th-century Arab author Muhammad al-Awfi, titled "Jawāmi' al-ḥikāyāt wa-l-awāmi' al-riwāyāt". The author mentions that Bulamir [Vladimir]'s envoy came to Khorezm to investigate what was required to become a Muslim. (See *Zapiski Vostochnogo otdeleniya Russkogo arheologicheskogo obshchestva*. Vol. IX. St Petersburg, 1896, pp. 262–267).

but it had become widespread among the Turks, who preferred *kumys* and *arak* instead. Might Vladimir have made an exception for ^{mead} and beer amongst the prohibited drinks, setting aside pomegranate wine—which was expensive in Russia as it was invariably imported from Constantinople—for his personal consumption? Furthermore, his refusal to arrange a drinking party with the German priest has certainly not been satisfactorily explained. As far as can be seen, many details are not elaborated upon in the chronicles, which is a matter worth pondering.

It is surprising that, whilst rejecting Judaism, the Russians read the Old Testament with curiosity during the 10th–12th centuries, occasionally quoting from it, and—as far as can be seen—did not equate the ancient religion of the Palestinian Jews with Talmudic Judaism. In the 20th century, these two distinct religious beliefs are well known to specialist historians; however, one must acknowledge that a thousand years ago, even educated people did not confuse these matters. In any case, it is no secret that Judaism, which spread exceptionally through magical means in the 10th century, was not accepted. The unfortunate example of Khazaria was still fresh in people's minds, but the reasons for the rejection of Islam and Catholicism are not a subject to be glossed over.

In the 9th and 10th centuries, the views we call 'anti-system' spread throughout the cultural world. The only exceptions were Russia, the peoples of Siberia, and, to some extent, Byzantium. Let us attempt to clarify the concept of 'anti-system' and derive arguments regarding the conclusion we wish to draw from the meaning of this phenomenon.

Since we have chosen nature—which encompasses not only our surroundings but also our very bodies—as our point of reference, our relationship with it may either take the form described in religious teachings, or it may be ambivalent, taking the form of philosophies that are diametrically opposed to it:

1. Human beings regard themselves as part of nature, the highest link in the biosphere. In this respect, they are no different from other animals or their own kind. They too kill to satisfy their hunger or protect themselves, exercise their right to procreate, and upon death, leave their bodies as food for other plants and predators.

2. Humans regard nature, in which they perceive a harmful element, as their enemy. In this context, the biosphere and the 'soul'—that is, consciousness itself—

12 This refers to a type of drink made by diluting honey and allowing it to ferment in the sun. (trans.)

He is compelled to place his own body—which he must inevitably save—within this alien environment. Although there may be different ways of doing this, the principle remains the same: to view the world as the source of evil.

Wherever written history exists, these two attitudes towards the biosphere are present. The first view was present in the early Christian, Islamic, Jewish, Hindu (Vedantic), Confucian, and Daoist traditions, as well as in the pagan systems of the Turks, Slavs and Finno-Ugrians. The second view did not emerge amongst the ethnic groups themselves, but at their points of intersection, and spread to areas of ethnic contact. The core of this view was first put forward by the Gnostics of Antioch, and subsequently persisted in Iran as Manichaeism, Mazdakism and Ismailism; in France as Catharism; in Bulgaria as Bogomilism; and in Asia Minor as Paulicianism. The logic of this view was captivating; for the question of ‘knowledge’—or, one might say, the lifting of the veil of secrecy—was at its heart. Yet people instinctively rejected its allure. In this regard, there was no difference between the people of China and France, or those of the Arab Caliphate or Southern Siberia. The peoples or communities that embraced this persistent doctrine swiftly lost their followers, their reputation, their culture and their independence. Yet the view of perceiving the world negatively re-emerged elsewhere with renewed vigour, once again spreading the ‘religion of light’ and leaving behind corpses and the ashes of burnt and destroyed things. In their view, the outcome was ideal: after the death of the harmful, the organisms were eliminated. But where did these anti-system supporters—who were numerous and took various forms—obtain the energy required for their peculiar cause? It would appear that, like the supporters of the positive system, they were quite passionate individuals. But at what cost?

Positive ethnic systems emerge through impulses (mutations) or genetic drift, and they sustain their existence by exerting effort against the nature of their own region. Anti-systems, on the other hand, do not form ethnic groups; they do not harm the rich natural environment, and they do not settle within the body of ethnic groups, just as a cancer virus enters and spreads throughout an organism. Their passivity is always high, yet they expend this through the intense conflicts caused by passionate tension, eventually manifesting at the borders of ethnic groups or super-ethnic groups. Different ethnospheres—that is, their most resource-rich segments—are utilised by anti-systems to destroy culture and nature. Their traditions,

It is passed on from master to apprentice and thus transmitted outside the family. In other words, the trait of inheritance that distinguishes humans from other mammals constitutes the subject of learning, which is considered meaningless without a written text. The difference between the 'living' traditions we acquire in our childhood and the 'artificial' traditions—that is, those acquired through books—is akin to the difference between organisms and objects. The former, upon the death of its bearer, is reconstructed by subsequent generations; the latter, however, gradually loses its vitality without any hope of reconstruction. Objects can only be subject to humans; written tradition, however, is reconstructed, that is, it forms a new *ethnos*. Herein lies the reason why the study and assimilation of humanism—that is, a dead cultural heritage—is termed the 'Renaissance'.

However, the anti-system is not a static entity. It draws its passion by feeding on the very fabric of the ethnic group that embraces it, much like a vampire. This poses no difficulty for it; for its aim is not to establish—that is, to consolidate a system—but rather to first transform the living organism into a lifeless entity, and then, by distorting its form, to render it amorphous. The latter, in turn, readily surrenders itself to the hands of annihilation, which is the ultimate aim of anti-systems.

Consequently, anti-systems sustain their existence for a long time by altering the host body—that is, the ethnic groups they have taken over. At times, they re-emerge in places where two or three ethnic behavioural patterns have been superimposed upon one another. In such cases, if it is forced to alter its religious symbols and doctrinal tenets, this is not a catastrophe for it. The principle of striving for annihilation persists, and this is the essence of the matter.¹³

13 Once people have entered a fantastical and magical world, they come to regard themselves as its masters—or, more accurately, they are sincere in this belief. To savour the freedom they have gained and to dominate their surroundings, they do not hesitate to commit acts such as spitting on the cross, as the Templars did; or splitting the Black Stone into several pieces, as the Ismailis did; or, again as they did, murdering a wise vizier; or drenching a country that has opened its arms to them in blood. True; when they embarked on this path, they certainly did not possess free will. On the contrary, they had lost even what they had possessed whilst in one positive system or another. The laws and traditions prevailing there guaranteed them certain rights in proportion to the duties they had undertaken. Here, however, they had no rights whatsoever. Strict discipline had placed an invisible leader, or a sheikh, or a master over them, yet these figures had instilled in their disciples nothing but the idea of hating their surroundings as much as possible. This sentiment, however, brought them such joy and exerted such a hold over their sense of self that sacrificing their own lives for a cause did not seem difficult at all.

It is, of course, impossible for conflicts between supporters of opposing systems to pass without leaving a trace. They consume one another, much like viruses with different characteristics, or acids and alkalis that neutralise one another during a reaction. The one with the larger following persists, and inevitably, some traces of it remain. If the system succeeds, ethnogenesis continues its normal course; but if the anti-system prevails, the ethnic group begins to disintegrate and weaken, becoming prey to its neighbours. However, the process of such reactions is a long one. Indeed, fierce conflicts can last for several centuries. For this reason, we can only observe the anti-system within the broad sweep of history.

IX. By the end of the century, Byzantium had settled its accounts with its own anti-system, Paulicianism, and had not yet entered into conflict with the new anti-system, Bogomilism. In Macedonia, on the border with Serbia, and in Western Bulgaria, some small Manichaean communities were operating in secret. As their time had not yet come, they did not appear particularly dangerous.

Consequently, within the Arab-Muslim and Romano-Germanic super-ethnic groups, anti-systems existed and continued their activities; moreover, their leaders had disguised themselves as mullahs and priest-theologians. The envoys sent by Prince Vladimir to conduct investigations could not discern the conflicts within the vast cultures of the West and the Near East. Now, placing ourselves in the position of these envoys, after examining the significance of Russia's conversion to Orthodoxy, the sentiment it evoked, and the activities of contemporaries at that time, we must make an 'empirical generalisation' in the light of the documents revealed by the observed phenomenon.

70. The Fragmentation of the Pole

Despite their ethnographic differences and political disagreements, the Eastern and Western Christian churches regarded themselves as a single 'body'—or, to put it in scientific terms, a single system—until the 9th century. Then, suddenly, a black cat crept between them, and this black cat did not disappear until three centuries later. The cause of this schism cannot be attributed to the dispute between Pope Nicholas I and Patriarch Photios. The conflicts between prelates and bishops, even on reasonable matters, were of a far more serious nature. However, this conflict was rooted in the ethnogenesis of Byzantium—

This coincided with the restructuring of the 'let' phase and, from a religious perspective, of Orthodoxy; in the West, too, it coincided with the laying of the foundations for a new worldview, brought about by the 'passioner' impulse altering patterns of behaviour and even thought. Whilst the Greeks were on the same path as the Muslim Mu'tazilites, who defended free will, the Franks had borrowed Eastern wisdom from the Ismailis, who were spreading under the name of Shi'ism in North Africa. The French and Italians had learnt these teachings from a Jewish master who was a customs officer in Spain; though, naturally, through the Jewish master's own interpretations. The Europeans had adopted Eastern philosophies to the extent of their own critical faculties; however, they lacked the capacity for anti-criticism, and the scientific traditions that were only just beginning to take shape in the 9th century were required. This had developed in two variants: one scholastic, the other heretical. The first emerged in the 9th century; the second was formulated as a discipline in the 11th century. This synthesis of worldviews and the break with orthodoxy would inflict great harm upon the Christian nations of the West. However, certain damages arising from ethnic contacts during the period of passionate upheaval were inevitable. The more difficult it became to grasp subtle theological matters, the greater the number of people who followed in its wake. The energetic master-priest J. Scott Eriugena, having learnt Greek, translated the works of Dionysius the Areopagite, Origen and Maximus the Confessor. Thus, having acquired much knowledge from the Indian 'Karik' philosophy, he established his own cosmological system, the principles of which are still taught as idealism in some European schools to this day.¹⁴ Eriugena's principal work, **On the Division of Nature**, contains a thesis which we shall briefly examine so as not to overlook the details of the matter:

Nature is the universe, divided into four categories of existence: the Creator, yet not created; the created and the creator; the created, yet not the creator; and the uncreated and the non-creator. The first is God. A God about whom we know nothing, and who, in essence, does not even know who He is. A God without beginning or end cannot act, that is, cannot move, nor does He rely on anything; the will to be with everyone prevents Him. In relation to the objects of the world, He is not 'living'; in relation to the mind, He is neither cause nor action; in relation to Himself, He is a 'divine darkness'. For, like a monad, He is equal to Himself. And this thing, which is not perpetually living, cannot create the innumerable actions that require constant activity. (Is this situation not a form of pantheism?).

14 Arsenyev, *From the Time of Charlemagne to the Reformation*. Vol. I, pp. 25–41.

This immense, non-existent entity desires to become living and, through the will it possesses, creates the Trinity. The Son, who becomes Nothing in the object, is the first example to assume many forms within this Trinity. Presumably these 'forms' are Platonic ideas—that is, emanations—which manifest as human souls that become objects and appear as 'the created and the creator'. These are partial ideals through which God attains consciousness. But since God is not a living being, then the spirits, which are the development of non-existence, cannot be grasped by God either (Hail Eriugena!).

Man's first body was a spiritual form that could not be divided into two poles. However, it was 'corrupted' because of the sin committed by Adam. The spirit, having taken on a living form, could have been elevated to the rank of angels and even higher. However, the beings of the sensory world around him belonged to the third category, namely the 'created but not creators'. Thus, man was separated from the biosphere as another being, reduced to the rank of an animal because of the tempting serpent. '... God curses not Adam and Eve, but only the serpent. This means that the Creator does not curse what He has created. For He creates only what is good. He curses the evil that does not proceed from Himself. But there is also the matter of the 'free will' acting in accordance with its own purpose." Here, although Johannes Scott Eriugena is reiterating Origen's views, the issue of the degradation of the human condition is also present in Indian philosophy.

As for nature's 'fourth category, which neither creates nor is created', this transforms into the source of life, that is, the 'divine darkness'. In this state, the body dissolves into the four elements. It comes to life by transforming into the soul. Subsequently, the entire human nature unites with God, whom Eriugena reveres. In other words, the 'divine darkness' embraces the souls of the dead. In short, for the ordinary person, the worst period is the Middle Ages.

Eriugena himself realised that there was no need to pray to an 'inanimate' being—one who created the world involuntarily, not through an act of creation but by emanation, and who had no part in its existence—and for this reason he proposed that one should believe in knowledge. "True philosophy is true religion." So be it, but the scientific knowledge referred to as philosophy at that time was also constantly changing. In other words, according to Eriugena, even dogmas—including the principles proposed above—must change. So, where do our criteria for realistic judgement stand in this situation? Was it merely an experiment?

Finally, in Eriugena's conception, there is no place for Satan, despite the fact that the Bible portrays him as an enemy and tempter of Jesus

Eriugena follows the example of writers from the 2nd and 3rd centuries who sought to reconcile monism with the words Jesus spoke directly regarding Satan's attempt to tempt him in the desert.

During the late ancient period, the question of the Devil's creation was debated on numerous occasions. In the 2nd century, Irenaeus of Lyon assigned a definitive place to the Devil, thereby incorporating him into church dogma. Irenaeus explicitly acknowledges that the Devil was created like the other angels, that he was inherently good in his own nature, possessed free will, and was capable of creating both good and evil in equal measure; however, he created only evil because he chose it of his own free will. Again, according to him, the Devil, considering his own pride, arrogance and majesty, and driven somewhat by the fire of envy, 'chose evil'. According to Origen's view, the Devil was cast out of heaven to earth because of these characteristics and was transformed into the lowliest angel of his kind. Upon seeing that Adam and Eve were his children, he was consumed by the fire of envy; he incited Cain to kill his brother and God's beloved servant, and has since become the chief architect of death that has persisted to this day. In addition to the reasons mentioned above regarding Satan's expulsion from heaven, lust also played a role in the expulsion of many angels who had become entangled with mortal creatures. As the lowly angels lived alongside him, the jinn—deemed unworthy of possessing divine powers—became Satan's helpers and companions. These roam the world and cause all manner of evil to befall mankind. According to Irineï, Satan's expulsion from heaven occurred between the creation of man and the period during which he atoned for his sins by being transformed into a bodily, lowly angel, even though his body was 'less physical than that of a normal human being'.¹⁵

It is readily apparent that Irineï of Lyon's version belongs not to the Bible but to the 'Book of the Visions of Enoch', written in 165 BC. This reflects the Old Testament tradition, which underwent significant alterations during the Maccabean period. The Qumran texts deal with the notion that the Wise God created the angels of Justice and Injustice, or the light and darkness that constantly struggle amongst themselves "in the heart of man". The God of Israel will aid the sons of Justice, who will ultimately achieve final victory.¹⁶

15 Lozinskiy, S. G. *The Book of the Ages of the Middle Ages*// Sprenger, Ya. Institute of the Hammer of the Witches. Moscow, 1932, pp. 4–5.

16 Amusin, I. D. *The Dead Sea Scrolls*. Moscow, 1960, pp. 170–172.

This view is consistent with biblical monotheism, which holds that both good and evil come from Yahweh in the same way. For example, the author of Isaiah 45 declared: "I am Yahweh, who creates light and invents darkness, who brings peace and creates evil—I am the one who does these things" (45:7 and 44:6–7)¹⁷ According to D. I. Amusin, the authors of the Qumran texts were influenced by the 'eternal time' concept found in Persian Zoroastrian philosophy—the Zrvan doctrine—which posits the birth of Ormuzd and Erimen. But if this is the case, the 'Book of the Dreams of Enoch' constitutes a protest against the idea of dualism and support for Satan, which is subject to rather severe punishments.

It is clear why Irineus and Eriugena adopted this version of Enoch. In their time, Gnosticism was the Church's greatest enemy. Christian polemicists, seeking arguments against Marcion, clung to ancient ideas that later proved to be a source of trouble for them. Origen, although Satan certainly did not wish to be worshipped, likely deemed it appropriate to put forward the view that he would be accepted as a god to be worshipped after the Day of Judgement. The Church, whilst not accepting Origen's version, had not rejected Irenaeus's—or, more accurately, Enoch's—interpretation. This is why the path to Satanism remained open.

Although Irenaeus regarded Satan as a being that came after one of the demons whom the ancients accepted as beings belonging to this world but more perfect than humans, he attempted to unify the subject under the nature of Satan and the demons.

"According to Tatian, a theologian of the second century, the bodies of Satan and the demons are composed of air or fire. Previously 'half-bodied', Satan and his minions had a need for food. Origen maintains that they devour the darkness of the dead 'as if emerging from famine'. They are, both intellectually and physically, more gifted than ordinary mortals, and according to Tatian, the view that they are the spirits of the dead is incorrect. By observing the positions and movements of the stars, they foresee the future and obtain important information which they willingly impart to women."¹⁸ This view explains why Christians killed emperors who worshipped demons as gods—

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 174.

¹⁸ Lozinskiy, S. G. *The Book of the Year in the Middle Ages* // Sprenger, Ya. and Inst. of History. Molot ved'm. Moscow, 1932, pp. 4–5.

In the 2nd and 3rd centuries, this was quite widespread. During that period, the spirits of the dead (empus) were the objects of the sorcerers' craft, who were subject to prosecution under Roman law. However, in the eyes of the Germanic peoples who had adopted Christianity, dwarves, fairies and gnomes were certainly not enemies, but rather 'little folk'. Consequently, the spirits of the dead, disturbed by humans (vampires), instilled an invincible fear, yet it was certain that the true source of evil lay in the existence of the Devil. It is at this point that the great master suddenly asserts that the signs of fear are necessary for the god whom man does not wish to know, and claims that God Himself is not the source of light, but rather the direct 'divine darkness'.

Is it possible that the priests at Malmesbury, where Eriugena served as archdeacon, did not hear him praying to the Darkness? They could not tolerate their own archdeacon blaspheming against the sacred, and finally, in 890, they killed him by striking him on the head with his own inkwell. But even after that, the thorny questions did not disappear.

The fate of Eriugena's views is also noteworthy. During the turbulent 10th century, matters concerning God were not debated, but when renewed interest in his views emerged from the late 11th century onwards, it became apparent that he bore responsibility for the emergence of many false doctrines within the Western churches and for the rise of all the heresies. In the 13th century, Eriugena's work **On the Division of Nature** was condemned at the Council of Sence, and the decision was ratified by Pope Honorius III in 1125. From that time onwards, Eriugena's views were adopted and developed "not by theologians, but rather by idealist philosophers such as Descartes, Spinoza, Kant, Fichte and Hegel".¹⁹ However, this subject falls outside the general scope of our chronological period and topic. What is most important for us is to understand what influenced the emergence of Eriugena's eclectic views—that is, how organic worldviews gave way to abstract concepts.

First of all, it should be noted that Eriugena's teachings did not cover only Christianity and religious matters. 'Divine darkness' is not a personal view, but rather an element resembling the Gnostics' Preloma. However, it bears a resemblance to the general outline of Indian atheistic philosophical views—

19 Arsenyev, *Ot Karla Velikogo...*, p. 41.

suggests that Eriugena was under the influence of the Arabs. Since Islamic orthodoxy [Ahl al-Sunnah] is opposed to atheism and even mysticism, it follows that our author was under the influence of the African Karmatians, who were active almost everywhere under the guise of Shi'ism.

Eriugena may have become acquainted with the views of the Karmatians through the Jews of Al-Andalus and Provence, who, whilst not adopting these views themselves, were happy to present them to Christians by adding their own interpretations. The depiction of humans as 'the created and the creator', that is, as beings spewed forth by the 'divine darkness', also points to this. These Jews bear a strong resemblance to Shi'ite imams, da'is and the 'benefactors' of humanity. As the people around them were, in any case, ignorant of theological matters, there was no question of them suffering any harm. In short, in Eriugena's teachings, one can discern an attempt to establish in the West something akin to the anti-system that was developing stormily in the East during the 9th century. In other words, Erigenism is a metastasis of Ismailism.

However, the ethnic composition of the two regions was different.

Throughout the East, interactions on a super-ethnic scale were being observed. Whereas in the West, instead of all the ethnic mosaics, there was a single super-ethnos, and the natural opposition of worldviews could only find a place within its boundaries. Consequently, although there was always some reaction to Eriugena's teachings—since he did not have the final say on the matters of divine providence and the responsibility of free will—they had not, on the whole, provoked a major backlash. The descendants of the former monotheists, St Augustine—or rather, the generation whose forebears, the intellectual forefathers, had been driven into the Manichaean community—were also part of this debate. These were people who, whilst distant from mystical ecstasy, were firmly committed to fantastical speculations that laid bare all opposing views from their own perspective and provided answers to every issue. Their theses were extremely simple and, in short, based on dualism.

The sphere of activity of these shrewd individuals was Italy and southern France, where Greek, Arab, Jewish and local heretics walked hand in hand. Then there were the German cities along the Rhine, which were effectively independent of both the feudal lords and the kings. The rivers stretching from the Rhine all the way to Flanders carried, along with their clear waters, the murky ideas that at least offered answers to the perplexing questions of the Middle Ages. The Dualists held that people would be held accountable for their sins, and that

They had not adopted an opposing stance.²⁰ Nevertheless, they often argued that human beings lacked free will, and divided them between the merciful Creator and evil gods. Human beings can only commit evil by acting against their will. Therefore, they are not held accountable for their sins; perhaps only their return ‘home’ may be delayed. With this “return”, they were aligning themselves with Eriugena’s cosmology; yet, there remained a distinction. Eriugena, by asserting that evil did not exist at the beginning, referred to God as the “divine darkness”. However, even in this case, it is unclear whom he was worshipping—God or the Devil. From his point of view, the priests were more reasonable in opting for the latter. For the (uncreated and creating) “divine darkness” does not fill its own emanation—that is, the (created and creating) ideals and the invisible objects filling the (created and uncreating) world—but rather—it was recalling to itself the restless spirits of the dead (the uncreated and the uncreating), that is, merely ‘subtle’ beings, the vampires that terrify people, and creatures of a lesser order in terms of evil.

If we were to explain this dilemma in terms that modern people can understand, we might say that in the system proposed, the role of the Devil has been taken on by the vacuum—which becomes hyperactive at the moment of collision with matter, and without which it cannot sustain its existence. However, as the people of that era felt the need to personify living entities, they referred to these as the leaders of good and evil—that is, the armies of Satan and Iblis—namely the lame jinn of Velzevul, Astarot, Astarte, Moloh and Hasmod, and thus they too were perceived as the agents of this hypothesis. With these attributes, they formed the theoretical basis for the establishment of the Second Inquisition and continued to exist until the Renaissance.

This philosophical movement, despite facing overt opposition, gradually consolidated its position and took shape within Scholasticism, alongside Realism and Nominalism. Those who followed in the footsteps of St Augustine, despite clearly operating within the bounds of the law, did not escape religious persecution—the sole exception being the trial of the priest Gottschalk by Raban Maur, Archbishop of Cologne—but, on the contrary, proved useful by supporting the rulers from the 10th century onwards. For heretics, religious

²⁰ Age., pp. 80–102.

persecution of heretics was St Augustine himself.²¹ His intolerance of Manichaeism dates back 1,000 years. Only J. Calvin succeeded in making full use of it, but it cannot be said that this was for the benefit of his own disciples.

71. Conclusion

Had the complex mix of religious symbols and political programmes in the Islamic world, alongside the doctrinal disputes in the Catholic world, satisfied the Russian seekers of faith? They could not have known! Kievan merchants and soldiers were constantly on the move in Constantinople, fighting in Greece and Asia Minor, and trading with the Egyptians and Syrians. Thus, understanding their economic structure and political situation was of vital importance to them. Moreover, whilst they observed the caliphs in Baghdad and Cairo engaged in a bitter sectarian conflict, they could not grasp the difference between Sunni and Ismaili Islam, as Slavic slaves were purchased in both Baghdad and Cairo.

The Russians maintained constant relations with Poland, where German priests were engaged in religious propaganda. Furthermore, the Russians were aware that the Greeks had composed hymns in the Slavic language, and that Pope John XIII had, in 967, prohibited worship 'in the Russian or Slavic language'.²² It is difficult to say that this ban reflected an attitude against the Russian language; however, the fact that the ban was issued a year after Svyatoslav's campaign against Khazaria and the fall of Itil inevitably draws attention. It is likely that the Rahdanians had secured support from the Pope.

However, even this was not enough to make a definitive decision. When adopting a foreign religion, one must place one's trust in missionaries—that is, mullahs or priests. But the Ismaili missionaries could assume the role of the mullahs and lay the foundations for a highly damaging anti-system in a foreign country. Indeed, they did the same among the Berbers and used them in the conquest of Egypt and the invasion of Syria, then their forces...

21 Osokin, N. N. *The First Inquisition and the Conquest of Languedoc by the French*. Kazan, 1872, II/158–159.

22 *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*. Scriptores. Vol. VI, p. 619; Kuzmin, A. G. *The Varangians and the Rus' on the Baltic Sea* // *Questions of History*. 1970. No. 10, p. 45.

They had set off for Nus and thus rid themselves of them. These events took place in the 70s of the 10th century, at the very time when a search for a new religion was beginning in Russia. One must assume that the Russians, unlike the Berbers, did not fall for such impostors, and indeed were greatly angered by them. For the Caliph Ubaydullah was a Jew, yet he presented himself as a descendant of the Prophet's daughter. However, one point must be emphasised here: if the Berbers did not pay heed to the true nature of events and did not investigate the true identity of the Mahdi at their head, the reason for this was that the commanders and the masses shared a common sentiment of hatred towards the Arabs. The Russians were certainly not interested in the squabbles among the caliphs, but they did not want liars and opportunists either.

Meanwhile, in the West, secret teachings had not only been brought to light, but the matter had been taken to extremes. According to one of the leading Protestant historians, heresy had been developing in secret, far from the public eye, until the 10th century. However, in the 10th century, it raised its head from the sands and found the courage within itself to openly display the energy and power it possessed.²³ Having learnt effective organisation from the Slavic Manichaeans settled in Macedonia and Dalmatia, heresy had spread from Italy to France and Flanders, where the Gnostics had paved the way for the Rafizis to penetrate the heart of Catholicism.²⁴

Of course, one might look for the reasons why Manichaeism did not appeal to the Russian envoys. However, under normal circumstances, it would be impossible for a sane person to conceive of the Devil or the Black God—whom they feared—as a mere wretched angel; an angel who, despite the lush forests, vast seas, and clear rivers teeming with wild game and beautiful women, was forbidden to marry; and that all these things were, in fact, abominable creations devised by the Devil for mortal men—such a notion was simply beyond his comprehension. Yet Europe had been nourished by Manichaeism; it had become impossible to distinguish heretics from Catholics. Moreover, the Church had ceased to hold sway even over trivial matters of morality.

The Russians in Greece and Italy believed that the Orthodox had attained salvation, whilst the wicked—that is, those who propagated immoral views—were punished with death—

23 Flathe. *History of the Forerunners of the Reformation*. Vol. I, p. 270; Arsenyev, *From Charlemagne...*, p. 71.

24 Arsenyev, *From Charlemagne...*, p. 72.

...it was established; in European monastic schools, the view that people did not have control over their own wills was set aside, because they could not comprehend the notion that certain fortunate souls in Paradise would claim all the blessings for themselves, leaving nothing for others, and even dividing the houris and eunuchs amongst themselves. Yes, although the Catholic Church did not explicitly deny it, it officially contradicted St Augustine's thesis; yet the master theologians preferred to follow in his footsteps. For Augustine's teachings did not hold people accountable for the sins they had committed and left the fate of sinners—even after death—to the discretion and initiative of the popes. Naturally, the popes were extremely pleased with this situation: but the Russian people were opposed to it.

In either case, the Russians could not engage in debate with theologians who had scrutinised the Qur'an and the Bible in minute detail; yet they sensed that these people were not seeking to enlighten those around them, but rather to exploit them. This is the nature of the anti-system. It cannot reject what is logical, yet it possesses a mindset that refuses to accept everything that is true.

The Russians did just that and chose Greek Orthodoxy. Byzantium wanted nothing from Russia but friendship and an end to the senseless attacks on the Black Sea coast. Moreover, it did not engage in religious propaganda by resorting to unimaginable methods and cunning.

By the 9th century, the Byzantines had already shaken off the affliction of viewing the world as an unworthy place to live—Paulicianism—and, without engaging in any religious wars, had confined the Slavic anti-system of Bogomilism within the borders of Bulgaria. Disturbed by the emergence of these unorthodox heretics, the Bulgarian khan Peter, after consulting with Archbishop Theophylaktos (933–956), had imprisoned most of the Bogomils.²⁵ Although this was handled rather harshly, it had also averted a danger that might have plunged the masses into a sea of blood.

The Eastern Church, however, never adopted St Augustine's views on predestination; on the contrary, it held its followers accountable for the actions they performed of their own free will. This view was something that pagans could understand and accept. Talmudic dualism—

25 *History of the Macedonian People*. Skopje, 1975, p. 38.

, of course, did not take a very positive view of the Old Testament and could therefore align itself with Gnostic-Manichaeian doctrines.

Compared to Catholicism, which viewed the Devil as a servant carrying out God's command, the view regarding the nature and cause of evil was amorphous and, consequently, flexible. Worship of the Devil was certainly not encouraged; in other words, there was absolutely no interference with the psychological makeup of the new converts, who were, by nature, accustomed to opposing evil.

From the account given above, it is clear why the Russian envoys advised Vladimir to adopt Greek Orthodoxy. If one considers that in the 10th century the prince was more attached to his alliances than to his own drujina, it must be accepted that the prince accepted and implemented the envoys' decision, even if not with great enthusiasm.

XII. THE POWER OF THE THING (986– 1036)

72. The Baptism of the Princes and the People in

Let us recall that, following Russia's liberation from Judeo-Khazar domination, two factions emerged in Kyiv. One was the Orthodox faction led by Olga and her grandson Yaropolk; the other was the neo-pagan movement under the leadership of Svyatoslav. As long as successful campaigns were being waged along the Volga and Danube, these two factions got on quite well with one another. However, the defeat at Bolgaria led to clashes between the sides, the deaths of princes and civil war. Ultimately, Vladimir emerged as the leader of the pagan faction, which was not supported by the people.

The cult of Perun was popular in Russia only amongst a few princes of Kyiv who were inclined towards Baltic paganism. A similar idol to Perun, with a silver head and golden ears, was found among the Western Slavic tribes of the Vagrians and Obodrites on the Baltic coast of Pomorye. There, too, they sacrificed roosters to Perun, as well as offering breadcrumbs and meat;¹ they also killed German and Danish prisoners with daggers before him. Vladimir, together with his peculiar neophytes, went even further, beginning to offer his own citizens as sacrifices to Perun.

Indeed, the prince's conversion to Christianity held great significance for all the people of Kyiv. For in this way, every single Kyivite had been spared the mortal danger that had threatened them. Vladimir took a further step by engaging in charitable works, which greatly pleased both the Church and the people. The significance of this step was so great that, as a result, the prince's personal status ceased to exist, and in the afterlife he would not be a ruler because of his sins, but rather an ordinary

1 Kuzmin, A.G. *Voprosi istorii*. 1970. No. 10, p. 53.

human being. After his baptism in 987,² Vladimir made peace with his own warrior družinas; with their help, he saved Basil II from death, baptised the people of Kyiv on the Dnieper in 988, and the people of Novgorod at Volhov in 989. Meanwhile, Perun, who had been cast down to the earth, seemed to cry out: "Damn it! Me, of all people! Into what merciless hands have I fallen?!"³

The matter of Vladimir's baptism is rather complicated. This is because the chroniclers were not seeking the truth, but rather pursuing their own partisan interests. The Legend of Chersonesos emerged in this way. According to this account, Vladimir took the Byzantine Princess Anna by the hand and presented her to his brother, but in return he converted to Orthodoxy in exchange for receiving Chersonesos as a crown. A. A. Shakhmatov, by examining the primary chronicles to make an empirical generalisation and drawing on monographs in which the chronicles are subjected to ruthless historical criticism, has established that this account is incorrect.⁴

The second point is no less significant, as it relates to ethnic psychology. Due to his personal conduct, Vladimir could not even be counted among respectable individuals, let alone be considered a saint. For he had openly raped the captive princess Rogneda; he had treacherously had his own brother Yaropolk killed, having summoned him to the tent where the Varangian assassins were hiding under the pretext of a meeting; organised a ceremony in Kyiv for the human sacrifice of Perun; held hundreds of Slavic and foreign female war captives, virgins, in mountain castles to satisfy his lustful desires; whilst his raiding parties attacked the Slavic tribes that had broken away from Kyiv during periods of turmoil. The descriptions of these events in the chronicles are rather terse. It is likely that the chroniclers did not take kindly to writing about them either. If that is the case, why did not only the church, but even the people, mention the prince's name in their songs? To harbour a love for a ruler to the point of death, without sufficient cause, is not something that would happen. Moreover, the Christianisation of the Slavs beyond the city walls was proceeding very slowly.

The destruction of Perun's statue had not pleased the Novgorod Slavs. For Perun was a foreign god; but the Novgorodians

2 Presnyakov, *Lectures*, p. 103.

3 The Novgorod Fourth Chronicle for the year 6497 (989); cited from PVL, H. 22, p. 344. O. Papov shares Nestor's view on the date of the baptism. See *The Introduction of Christianity in Rus'*, p. 107, note 52.

4 Shakhmatov, *Studies*, pp. 133–161; PVL, H. 22, p. 56.

As we shall see in the description and analysis of subsequent events, they were not yet ready to accept Christianity. As for other cities, even the larger ones, the adoption of the new religion was proceeding rather slowly there too. Chernigov, situated near Kiev, ^{was} not baptised until 992; Smolensk, situated on the Varangian-Greek route, had adopted Christianity by 1013.⁶ Both the Slavic tribes that had come under the rule of the Prince of Kiev (the Krivichs, the Radimichs) and the other Slavic tribes that had retained their independence (the Vyatichs) were still clinging to their primitive worldviews.

However, the resistance shown by the ancient cults against Christianity—which, albeit slowly, was steadily approaching victory—was not particularly formidable. The old beliefs are steadfast, but passive. They can only mount a defence in order to avoid extinction. Consequently, the ideological system formed during the surging passions of the ethnic groups is always aggressive and poses a danger to its neighbours. Viewed from this perspective, the victory over Perun marked a turning point that would determine the fate of Christianity in Russia. Nevertheless, the period in which Christianity established its undisputed supremacy over pagan cults only

in the 12th century. We too have a few words to say on the matter. The only thing we can accept at present is that the victory achieved by Kyiv and the Kyivans over the Slavic and Baltic tribes was realised only through the continuation of Olga's political line and the establishment of an alliance with the powerful Byzantine Empire.

It appeared that an era had come to an end, but it was like a brief interlude. Vladimir, who had long since converted to Christianity, returned to his father's political line in 989 and launched a campaign against Chersonesos (Korsun). The city, besieged by land and sea, only surrendered after the water supply, which came through underground pipes, was cut off.⁷ The person who informed Vladimir of the location of the water pipes was, according to some sources, a citizen named Anastos, whilst other sources claim it was a Varangian named Jedbern who sent a message by shooting an arrow from the castle. Between you and me, the city would soon be abandoned by the Russians and fall into Byzantine hands. Why? Or was it the bride price sent to the ruler?

5 RPSRL. Vol. IX, p. 15> cf. Shevchenko, *Na rubeje*, p. 52.

6 Vinogradov, I.P. *A Historical Sketch of the City of Vyazma from Ancient Times to the 17th Century*. Moscow, 1890, p. 6, note 4.

7 Shahmatov, *Studies*, pp. 140–141.

No, the matter was quite serious. From 990 onwards, Byzantium had shifted from defence to offence, bringing Georgia and part of Armenia under its control and renewing the war against the Bulgarian khan Samuel. Vladimir's attack on Korsun, however, had led to the Byzantines' allies, the Pechenegs, launching a retaliatory attack against Russia. As a result of the war, which lasted from 989 to 997, Russia lost the steppes around the Black Sea, whilst the forest-steppes could only be defended by means of earthworks and fences. In short, the Korsun campaign had proved costly for Russia.

The return to the political line of the past was, I suppose, a kind of natural reaction against the adoption of the new religion; yet a parallel had emerged here between the fates of Byzantium and Old Russia: the process initiated by Constantine and Vladimir seemed irreversible and was advancing at breakneck speed. Cities were vying with one another to adopt Christianity, the new state religion that offered the hope of eternal life. Alongside the new faith, the spread of literacy and the development of the art of engraving meant that an increasing number of people were coming under the influence of this cultural tide. If any commander ventured out, he would be fighting the pagan Pechenegs or clashing with overseas emperors. This was his duty towards those who could not save their souls. Christianity had dealt a fatal blow to paganism in Russia and was marching from victory to victory.

The decisive factor in the complex process of religious conversion was the city of Kyiv, which ranked third in Europe in terms of size and importance after Constantinople and Córdoba. In 1117, the Polish historian Titmar, who was in Kiev, provided a meaningful and concise description of the city in the following words: 'In this great city, the capital of the state, there were over 400 churches, 8 markets and an extraordinary number of people. Indeed, it seemed as though they had all fled from the surrounding regions, for the place was teeming with runaway slaves. Most of the Danes (Datčans – L.G.) were agile people. Kyiv had successfully resisted the Pechenegs, whom it detested, and had subjugated the others.'⁸

The splendour of the mighty Kiev gave it an advantage over other Russian cities. To escape captivity, one had to be tall and imposing, look valiant, and be imbued with a bio-chemical energy embodying what we call the 'passion' of a living organism. A few centuries later, Av-

8 *History of the USSR*. Moscow, 1966, p. 518.

Just as Paris did in Europe, Kyiv had absorbed the fervour of all the great nations like a sponge. As Christianity had been the dominant religion of the Kievan people for a long time, right up until Vladimir, there had been no unrest in the city, nor had any 'Brownian passionate movements' been observed. Any Slav or Varangian who came to Kiev and wished to live there could do so and settle in the city. However, to do so, he had to accept Christianity and establish good relations with the local Christians who had lived there before his ancestor Oleg seized the city in 882 and who had managed to save their lives from Svyatoslav's tyranny in 972. Vladimir set aside for himself not only the most loyal and brave warriors among these newcomers, but also the peace-loving merchants and hard-working farmers.

Vladimir's advisers had realised this, but they did not stand in the way of this process, which was unfolding beyond their control. For they held the reins of foreign policy and were able to find a way out of the situation. Instead of allying itself with the Patriarch of Constantinople, Russia had established relations with the Bulgarian Patriarch in Ohrid. In 976, Western Bulgaria fell into the hands of anti-Greek rebels led by the *kometopouloi*—such as David, Mois, Aaron and Samuel, the sons of Komes Nikolaos—making it possible to bring books, icons and religious scholars from there. M. D. Priselkoff has discussed the relations between the Bulgarians and the Russians in the work mentioned above. The dualistic motifs in early Russian literature are likely also a result of these contacts. However, these lie outside the scope of our discussion.

In the early 11th century, Vladimir established friendly relations with 'Boleslav of Lyad, Stefan of Ugorsk and Andrich of Chemska',⁹ that is, with the new Christians who had adopted their faith from Rome. Of course, at that time the churches had not yet split, but relations between Rome and Byzantium had become severely strained. The diplomatic initiative launched by Vladimir was aimed at seeking ways to sever ties with the traditions established by Svyatoslav and Olga. Under these circumstances, a third option was to establish contact with the West. This was because the Muslim East was in a state of constant war with Russia. In 997, Vladimir was forced to *organise* a campaign against the Kama Bulgars,¹⁰ and for this reason, his army on the southern borders

9 The 'Chronicle of Nestor' records that this text dates from the year 997. This suggests the presence of some young chroniclers. However, such obvious ambiguities are not encountered in the 11th century.

10 Nikonovskaya Chronicle for the year 6505; see PVL, H. 22, p. 350.

had withdrawn some of their forces, and naturally the Pechenegs, who were at that time engaging with Islamic missionary movements, immediately took advantage of this opportunity.¹¹

73. The Lost Case of

Sometimes a single mistake can bring about a host of unforeseen consequences. The dispute with the Byzantines, which began as a result of the raid on Korsun in 989, led on the one hand to a violent war between the Pechenegs and the Russians, whilst on the other hand it paved the way for the development of relations with Bulgaria; as mentioned above, this enabled the young Russian Church to acquire books, icons, priests and explanatory information on certain religious matters from there. Such priest-theologians were present not only in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary in the 10th century, but also in Germany and Italy. For the Roman Church had been gripped by the anticipated crisis. In Bulgaria, however, wherever one turned, one might encounter not just one, but several priest-theologians. The propaganda of Manichaeism and Marcionism could not reach those in their vicinity. For to debate with the Manichaeans, one needed to know their doctrines. Yet he had managed to disguise himself very well. Not every clergyman, however, was clever enough to identify the points in the meticulously prepared documentation that required correction. Consequently, the relations established with Bulgaria held considerable dangers for Russia.

Meanwhile, King Samuel had ruthlessly ravaged Greece and Thrace; Emperor Basil, who had recovered from his initial defeat, had earned the nickname 'the Bulgar' due to his cruelty. In 1001, he launched planned attacks against the Bulgarians and had the eyes of captured Bulgarian prisoners gouged out. It is interesting that the Bulgarian clergy assisted Basil, rather than Samuel, during the siege of Vidin. Ultimately, the Bulgarians suffered a crushing defeat, and King Samuel died of a nervous breakdown on 6 September 1014. His son Gabriel Radomir would meet his end at the hands of assassins, his successor would be murdered in 1018, and thereafter Bulgaria would surrender unconditionally.

The downfall of an ally could not affect Russia's situation. The Kievan Rus', through its alliance with Byzantium—that is, the tradition of Olga—maintained friendly relations in the West

11 Kunik, A., Rozen, V. *Reports by al-Bekri and other authors on Rus' and the Slavs*. Vol. I. St Petersburg, 1878, pp. 58–60.

. The scale of the disillusionment caused by the administration in the capital had grown.

The administrative problems faced by a pagan country due to Christian rule were even more complex. In the Rostov-Suzdal lands, the volhavs, unlike the priests of Perun, had begun agitation by exploiting their popularity among the people. In Novgorod, Prince Yaroslav Vladimirovich, son of Rogneda, had entered into a dispute with his own citizens in an attempt to protect them from the wrath of the Novgorodians, who were incensed by the murders committed by his Varangian comrades; ultimately, blood was shed.¹²

However, even Prince Yaroslav, faced with this delicate situation, would sever his ties with his father; he would withhold the two-thirds of the taxes previously collected that he had sent to Kiev. It was certain that this would be deemed a cause for war, and indeed, Vladimir would raise an army in 1015 and march on Novgorod.

Vladimir's eldest son, Svyatopolk,¹³ was the son of a Greek nun who had been taken captive by Svyatoslav. Unloved by his father, Svyatopolk had sought to compensate for this by befriending the Polish bishop Reinbern Koloberejskiy,¹⁴ Reinbern, for his part, had come here from Poland accompanied by his fiancée—who would later become Svyatopolk's wife—and also the sister of King Boleslav I. Although the churches had not yet split, Vladimir nevertheless placed his son under house arrest and had the bishop thrown into the prison where he would later meet his end.

Vladimir's favourite son was Boris, the elder brother of the young Gleb, who lived in the border town of Murom. In 1015, the elderly prince had also entrusted the command of the army assembled against the Pechenegs to this son. Vladi-

12 As these events and the subsequent developments have been described in detail by many authors of Old Russian history, there is no point in repeating the same things here. The aspects of these events that concern us are those relating to the religious conflict and the features that stand out when making a broad generalisation.

13 The most accurate account is that Vladimir's first son was Vysheslav. However, there are no records of him in historical sources.

14 Priselkov, *Essays on the Church-Political History of Kievan Rus' in the 10th–12th Centuries*, pp. 55–56.

15 *PM*, H. 22, p. 364.

Mir had exactly 12 sons, but the others, with the exception of Mstislav Tmutarakanskiy—whom we shall discuss shortly—are of no concern to us.¹⁶

The three princes named here were men who followed three distinct paths in Russia. Of these, Yaroslav was a pagan; Svyatopolk was pro-Western; and Boris was a supporter of the Bulgars. There were likely also pro-Greek factions amongst those who paid tribute to Yaropolk, and their commander, Varaike, had taken refuge with the Pechenegs. As the prince was a dangerous man, these people kept their voices silent. However, when Vladimir died suddenly on 15 July 1015, all those who had been crushed under his iron fist sprang into action.

It appears that during the quarter-century of relative peace (since the war with the Pechenegs had mainly taken place in the border regions and had not affected the interior), the cities had grown so powerful that the ruling princes at their heads had, inevitably, become dependent on the people living in these cities and were therefore compelled to fulfil the wishes of their subjects. However, Prince Vladimir's rule had lost its popularity among the people of Kyiv. These two observations will shed light on the details of the course of events that followed.

M. D. Prisélkoff, the Prince of Kiev, having shaken off the yoke of Tsargrad [Istanbul], turned to Bulgaria, which was under the control of King Samuel of the Bulgars—

16 The list of Vladimir's sons is not consistent across all chronicles (see PVL, H. 22, p. 325); moreover, although this has little bearing on our subject, the question of their lineage remains unresolved. For this reason, we shall confine ourselves to the records in official sources dating from the year 988: those by Rogneda: Izyaslav, chieftain of the princes of Polotsk; Mstislav (died in prison in 1036), Yaroslav the Wise (d. 1054) and Vsevolod (to be discussed below). Those by Yaropolk's widow, a Greek nun: Svyatopolk Okayanniy, son of two fathers (d. 1019); those by his Czech-born wife: Vysheslav; and by another Czech wife: Svyatoslav Drevlyansky (d. 1015) and Mstislav. Those by a Bulgarian wife: Boris and Gleb. The following are also included in the same list: the unfortunate Sudislav, captured by Yaroslav in Pskov in 1036 and held in prison until 1059; and, according to rather unreliable sources, Pozvizd, who lived in Volhynia (PVL, H. 22, p. 343) Vsevolod, meanwhile, was the first prince in Russian history to go into exile in the 990s, fleeing to Switzerland where he died in 995. Vladimir also had two daughters by Rogneda: Predslava and Maria Dobrognieva (wife of King Casimir of Poland). However, of the numerous descendants of all these, only the children of Izyaslav of Polotsk and Yaroslav the Wise survived.

He had observed that the archbishop of Ohrid was leaning towards the Bulgarians. Although Samuel, being Orthodox, aroused the suspicion even of the Bulgarian priests, this situation did not concern Vladimir Krasnoye Solnishko in the slightest. As Michael Psellos (see below) also noted, he had made it a habit to adopt a hostile stance towards the Greeks; however, the Pecheneg obstacle between them prevented him from launching an attack on Constantinople. Voivode Varajko, who was truly loyal to the memory of Prince Yaropolk and his friends, had succeeded in pulling Vladimir's defensive line back from the Black Sea coast to the forest-steppe region, thereby enabling Russia to establish direct contact with Bulgaria. Rather than striking a decisive blow, the Pechenegs chose to isolate Bulgaria; in this situation, Vladimir was forced to direct his army towards appeasing the discontent of his own subjects, who refused to tolerate the eclectic policies of the ruling administration.

It seemed that Vladimir could now die with no regrets. He had entrusted command of the military forces and the golden throne of Kyiv to his beloved son Boris; as for his hated stepson Svyatopolk, he had imprisoned him, and perhaps even handed him over to the executioner. However, everything was to turn out quite the opposite of what he had hoped. Immediately after his death, they released Svyatopolk from prison and placed him on the throne; Boris's army, meanwhile, abandoned their commander and scattered in all directions.¹⁷ Upon this, Svyatopolk sent assassins after Boris and his brother Gleb. The third brother, Svyatoslav, who had taken refuge with the Drevlians, tried to escape but was captured and killed. Yet, the fate that befell these young princes, who were entirely innocent, would not move a single soul.

On the other hand, Yaroslav had brought shame upon himself by killing the town representatives who had come to the court to ask him to find a solution to the townspeople's dispute with the Varangians. However, the people of Novgorod wished to go to war against the people of Kiev. Therefore, despite the prince's treachery, they mustered an army of three thousand men and, having also hired a thousand mercenary Varangians, set off for Kiev to take revenge on Svyatopolk, the fratricide. As you can see, there is always an excuse to go to war.

17 After killing Yaropolk, Vladimir had married his wife, who was still pregnant. For this reason, Svyatopolk was known as the 'child of two fathers'. However, Vladimir did not love him at all.

18 Priselkov, Priselkov, *Essays on the Ecclesiastical and Political History of Kievan Rus' in the 10th–12th Centuries*, p. 59.

Thus, Vladimir's political plans were thwarted by his death and led to the murder of his beloved sons. As is well known, politics is a regional matter tied to specific calculations of interest; but religion influences the formation of the conscience of both individuals and an entire nation. Consequently, just as had been the case in Rome during the time of Constantine and his successor Arius's patron Constantios, the inertia brought about by the Christianisation of Russia could not be overcome, despite the great prince's errors.

74. The Motives and Symbols of the Civil Wars

As the details of the battle between Yaroslav and Svyatopolk have been discussed at length on numerous occasions, we shall focus on the psychological aspect of this conflict, which has previously been overlooked. Let us recall the views of the civil war expert Farinata delli Uberti. According to him, every individual participating in a civil war goes to kill his fellow countrymen or to sacrifice himself. Whereas in a war against foreigners, one makes decisions not consciously and by exercising one's will, but according to one's own and others' emotions. A. Thierry, who studied the wars between the Merovingians and the Carolingians, concluded that Charles the Bald and Lothair did not blindly submit to the kings' wills; rather, despite knowing it would cost them dearly according to the customs of the time, they imposed their own personal views and thoughts. The fusion of principles with individuals, if driven by sufficient passion, transforms into a symbol worth sacrificing one's life for. It is only through this union that the soldier acquires a warrior's spirit. Otherwise, if everyone were to act as they pleased, then everyone would want something. For instance, a man from Novgorod loves to curl up by his stove, stuffing himself until he bursts and drinking his wine. But if a man from Novgorod leaves his home to go on a campaign, his life no longer holds any value for him. For him, the most important thing is now the war.

Of course, Yaroslav or Svyatopolk were not warriors themselves. But no one followed in the footsteps of Boris and Gleb either. So, Svyatopolk and Yaroslav had become symbols of a programme that boiled people in the cauldron of passion. Yet we already know that Svyatopolk was a Western admirer. Yaroslav's soldiers, however—

We can surmise that there were many pagans, both Scandinavians and Slavs, among them. However, they were compelled to convince themselves that Kyiv was now unambiguously Christian. In this situation, the social outlook of the capital would determine the fate of Kyiv's golden throne and establish that only those who sided with the people and the boyars could sit upon it. Having made this observation, we can now proceed to analyse the events.

As soon as Svyatopolk succeeded Vladimir, he shifted his political course by 180 degrees. He not only made peace with the Pechenegs but also became their ally. But this conciliatory stance came too late. For Muslim missionaries had been roaming among the Pechenegs for some time, and befriending them did not equate to making peace with Byzantium for the people of Kiev. Nevertheless, the Pechenegs sent Svyatopolk a detachment of soldiers—in whom Svyatopolk had placed great hopes. However, during the battle near Lyubech, the Pechenegs were unable to provide assistance due to the lake lying between them and Svyatopolk's army; consequently, the Novgorodians emerged victorious, and Svyatopolk fled to Poland sought refuge with Boleslaw I.

The Novgorodians who entered Kiev 'burned the churches'.¹⁹ Yes, yes, not the merchants' shops or houses, but actually the churches. This incident does not reflect Yaroslav's position (for I do not believe he held any such position at the time), but rather illustrates the state of mind of the Novgorod army. It was impossible to approach the people of Kiev with such an unacceptable attitude, but the Pecheneg raid of 1017 had drawn their attention to the need to defend the city. The Pechenegs had been defeated, but when Yaroslav was defeated by the Polish king Boleslav at the Bug in the following year, 1018, the Kievan Rus' did not come to his aid, and the prince was forced to flee to Novgorod with 'four men'.²⁰

Boleslav and Svyatopolk had entered Kiev, but the people of Kiev did not want to see the Poles in the city. Polish soldiers were being killed by their hosts whilst on duty and whilst asleep. Faced with this situation, Boleslav decided that it would be in his best interests to withdraw with his troops, whereupon Svyatopolk reaffirmed his friendship with the Pechenegs.

19 *PL*, H. *LL*, p. 96.

20 *Ibid.*, p. 97.

In this chronicle, Svyatopolk does not appear in a favourable light. It follows, then, that his relationship with Boleslav I the Brave must have been the opposite. Boleslav was the last knight of the ancient Slavic alliance, which had been disrupted by the Avars at the end of the 6th century. From 1002 onwards, he sought to unite the Western Slavs and transform the Slavic state into a force capable of standing up to the German Empire. He had driven the Germans beyond the River Elbe, even capturing the fortress of Meissen (on the Elbe, present-day Dresden), which served as their stronghold; he had expelled Boleslav III the Brave from Prague and united Czechoslovakia with Poland.

It appeared that a victory had been won, but the Czechs and even the pagan Lutici had offered their assistance to Emperor Henry II against the Poles. In 1005, a joint army comprising German, Czech and Lutici forces drove the Poles back, and Boleslav withdrew from the territories he had conquered in accordance with the Treaty of Poznań. In 1007, the war broke out again; but this time, it was the Czechs and Lutici, who were encouraging the Germans, who initiated the conflict. The Poles emerged victorious and had advanced as far as the Elbe by around 1012. The Germans sought peace, and Henry II was taken prisoner.²¹

The third phase of the war, which took place between 1015 and 1018, also came to a successful conclusion, yet the Poles had gained nothing. Neither the Lutici, nor the Rusichi, nor the Czechs wished to unite with Poland. Just as Lothair had set aside the natural law of ethnogenesis in 840 to prioritise the preservation of the empire, so too did Mečislav, son of Boleslav, become a vassal of the empire in 1032 after suffering a heavy defeat at the hands of the Germans. Poland had been divided into several parts and was no longer a threat to its neighbours. Without sincere friends, neither a people nor an ethnos can exist.

Yet in 1018, no one could have foreseen events unfolding in this manner. Svyatopolk the Just, meanwhile, was enjoying the zenith of his reign in Kyiv.

Yaroslav was in a state of panic. He wanted to abandon everything and flee to Sweden, but the *posadnik** Konstantin Dobrinić had Yaroslav's ship set alight and launched a new campaign against Kyiv. In the battle that took place off the coast of Alta in 1019, the Novgorodians defeated the Pechenegs, Svyatopolk's last allies. Svyatopolk attempted to flee to Poland—

²¹ Veber, *General History*, VI/132–151.

* *Posadnik*: Administrator of a town-state in medieval Russia (trans.).

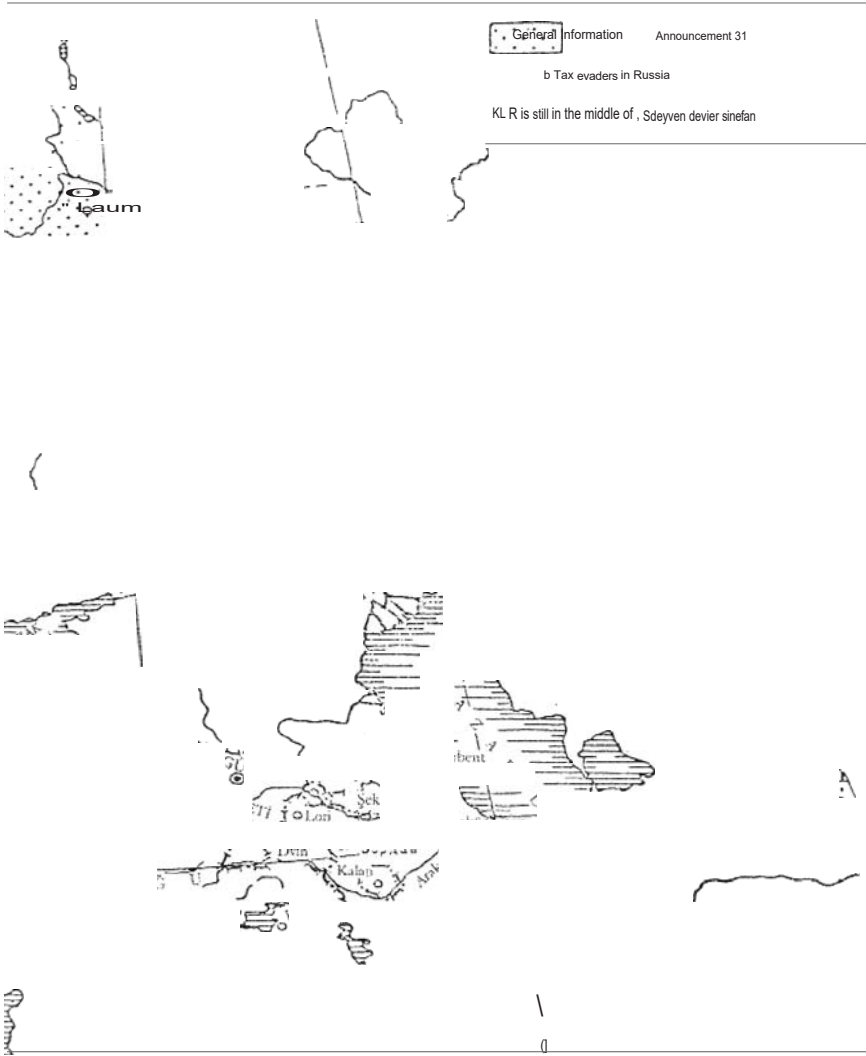
He died on the way. According to the chronicles, he died unable to bear the burden of the pangs of conscience that caused his psychological distress. Thus, Yaroslav ascended the golden throne of Kyiv, but this time the churches were not burned.

Although a victory had been achieved amidst the reactions of pagan forces, the war in which brother killed brother had ended, yet this situation had led to the strengthening of Christianity. The mechanism of the process is simple. In Novgorod, where pagans held sway, the passioners opposed to Christianity were maintaining the initiative. The same group of zealots had attacked Kiev, but they were wiped out by the swords of Polish knights on the Bug and by the arrows of the Pechenegs on the Alta. Those who managed to survive succeeded in securing a treaty guaranteeing them the right to live in the city. They were satisfied with this agreement and had returned home to have the wounds they had sustained during the war treated. Their children, however, would be raised in an environment dominated by Christian culture, as Slavic paganism had been isolated following the Christianisation of Scandinavia.

It is, of course, impossible to imagine that such an outcome could have been foreseen. Even Prince Yaroslav had not anticipated that the rebellious Novgorod would willingly come under the influence of Kievan culture. However, he had taken the necessary precautions, essentially sidelining Posadnik Konstantin Dobrinić, who had helped him ascend the throne and was also his cousin. ‘... Grand Prince Yaroslav, enraged, exiled him to Rostov and had him killed on the banks of the Otsa (Oka) River in Murom in the third summer.’²² Thus, with the Novgorodian rebels deprived of their leaders, the ‘north-western’ issue was resolved in favour of Kievan hegemony, and consequently the Orthodox Church.

However, the problem on the south-eastern border remained unresolved. For there lay the *de facto* independent Principality of Tmutarakan, which was in contact with the remnants of the Judeo-Khazars and the allied Pechenegs—who had adopted Islam—that is, with another super-ethnic group. This threat was no less dangerous than the northern and western issues, as Kyiv’s steppe flank remained exposed. Whilst we are occupied with recounting the civil war, let us take a look at what was happening on the steppe.

22 The First Sofiyskiy Chronicle; PVL, H. 22, p. 368.



75. Used Chance

The subject of the figure's role in history has been addressed previously. There is no need to pretend to be more knowledgeable on this matter, but we must make use of the conclusions reached. Prince Mstislav's character would have held no significance for the destinies of the people under different circumstances; however, in complex situations, certain traits of this prince played a role in the development of the chain of events in specific directions; yet this chain was severed prematurely by a mere coincidence.

Chronicles describe Mstislav as follows: stout, with a ruddy complexion and large eyes; brave in battle; he loved his soldiers and never spared them gifts or luxuries. In short, he was a thoroughly intelligent man, the envy of those around him.

Could it have been any other way? He had been brought to Tmutarakan as a child and had grown up there amongst his peers—that is, the city's ever-changing community of merchants. His playmates from his childhood, his young friends from his carefree days, were not the few Slavs, but rather the locals who referred to themselves as 'Khazars' and were mostly composed of Khazar Jews. The true Khazars lived beyond the borders of the Tmutarakan Principality, in the lower reaches of the Volga, Terek and Don rivers. They were known as *the 'brodniks'* and, despite speaking a widely used form of Slavic and being Orthodox, were considered neither Russian nor Jewish.²³ The Principality of Tmutarakan was an island among the neighbouring steppe peoples. The border with its neighbours had been established following a minor war.

According to some rather unreliable accounts, Mstislav lived for about forty years as a hospitable, brave and reliable man, going about his business in a society of mixed Russian and Jewish origin, until fate provided an opportunity for him to become a Christian. The chief enemy of his Jewish friends was the Kasog, or Circassian tribe, living on the foothills of the Caucasus Mountains. Fortifications were likely erected to protect their herds against them and to withstand sieges.²⁴ However, the Khazar Jews, when it came to active engagement, were inclined towards the Russian prince, who was a sincere friend to them and sought a reputation for valour.

23 Gumilev, L.N. *The Discovery of Khazaria*, p. 176. Hereafter: Gumilev, *The Discovery*.

24 Bidjiyev, X.X., Radlo, A.V. *Excavations at the Khumarinsk Fortress*, pp. 12–13.

In 1022, Mstislav killed the Circassian prince Rededya in a duel, but treated the survivors of the defeated side with mercy; by marrying Rededya's son to his own daughter, he secured the friendship of the Kasogs, thereby expanding the ranks of his small army, which consisted of Russian and Khazar Jews. Thus, a small state resembling the Khazar Empire had emerged on the shores of the Sea of Azov. The sole, yet highly significant, difference between the two was that this state was led by a devout Christian.

After defeating Rededya, Mstislav rebuilt the Church of the Mother of God in Tmutarakan; shortly before his death, he also established a synagogue in Chernigov, and his son was baptised. In short, living alongside the Judeo-Khazars did not lead to the Russians assimilating with the Jews; the two ethnic groups lived in friendly relations, yet separately. However, the fateful moment that would determine the fate of the Principality of Tmutarakan had arrived in 1023.

The fierce civil war that broke out in Russia in 1015 between Svyatopolk Oka-yanniy and Yaroslav the Wise following Vladimir's death had weakened the country. After defeating Svyatopolk, Yaroslav was forced to reclaim the regions that had broken away from him. Bryachislav, Prince of Polotsk and Yaroslav's nephew, seized and plundered Novgorod in 1021; Yaroslav marched out with his army to rescue the captives, but the war was not yet over. The Volohs [Ulahs] had rebelled in the vicinity of Suzdal. "The rebellion was massive" and was only suppressed in 1024. The Vyatichi had seceded and could only be brought under control by Vladimir Monomakh. The Severians, meanwhile, were the Russified descendants of the warrior Sabirs. In this situation, the time had come for Mstislav to take action.

In 1023, "Mstislav marched against Yaroslav together with the Khazars and the Kasogs". According to the chronicle's style of narration, the initiative always lies with the prince, and the influence of advisors or the pressure of public opinion holds no significance. However, in the light of the events described, it is more accurate to assume that the Khazars and the Kasogs marched against Russia, and that a number of Russians brought along by Mstislav Vladimirovich participated in the capture of their own country.

At that time, Yaroslav was in Novgorod. Mstislav, however, had occupied the city of Chernigov—located on the border between the lands of 'Rus' and 'Seversk'—in 1024;²⁵ but the people of Kiev, accompanied by the prince, the Jew

25 *Drevnerusskiye knyazestva X–XIII vv.*, pp. 9 and 63–64.

entered the city.²⁶ Yaroslav, too, had returned from Novgorod with a mercenary Varangian *druzhina*. On a stormy autumn night, the Scandinavians encountered the steppe tribes in the town of Listven and killed one another under the flashes of lightning.²⁷

Mstislav had positioned the Severians on the front line, keeping his own *druzhina* in reserve. When the warriors grew weary, Mstislav's cavalry charged the Varangians, driving them back and slaughtering those who fled, whilst Yaroslav had fled to Novgorod.

One might think that after such a victory, Kiev and all the Russian lands should have fallen into Mstislav's hands, but the opposite happened, and Mstislav sought peace. Why?

The chronicler relates a remark allegedly uttered by Mstislav on the morning following the night the battle took place: 'Who would not rejoice at this? Here lie the Severians, here lie the Varangians; my *druzhina*, however, stands firm and unshaken'. This brazen audacity, which drove one to despair, had shown the Severians that they had not been rescued, but rather used. Such behaviour towards allies was quite common in the 10th–11th centuries. For example, the princes of the Volga had set the Khwarezmian mercenaries upon the Rus' and Magyars, and the Rus' upon the Deylemians and Greeks, showing not the slightest pity for the dead. The Severians who managed to survive could not consider themselves disgraced, but without their practical support, Mstislav could not have even contemplated capturing Kiev.

This behaviour was perhaps merely a trivial indiscretion on the part of a prince of weak character, but might the Khazar Jews have had a hand in this? Perhaps they did, but if so, then this indiscretion was the result of growing up in a foreign environment and, consequently, inevitably adopting foreign worldviews. Yet there was no need to include even a casual note of caution in the chronicle. However, these foreign worldviews would, in due course, exert their influence sufficiently strongly to become a political programme.

In short, the victorious Mstislav demanded peace from the defeated Yaroslav on the grounds that he was his elder brother.²⁸ He referred to himself as 'the younger

²⁶ *PL*, H. *LL*, p. 99.

²⁷ *PL*, H. *LL*, p. 371.

²⁸ D.S. Lihachev has drawn attention to the fact that the chronicle texts do not agree with one another. The difficulties he highlights do not invalidate our explanation that the chronicle texts contradict one another.

brother' was to mean respect for their rights to autonomy. Indeed, that was the case.

But where would Mstislav's victorious drujina go? The Kasogs (Circassians) had abandoned him and returned to Tmutarakan, where, with the help of the Ossetians (Yas), they had seized the city.²⁹ However, in 1029, Yaroslav sent an army against the Yases and recaptured Tmutarakan.³⁰ Mstislav remained loyal to the Grand Prince until his death in 1036; thereafter, the lands of Chernigov and Seversk were incorporated into Rus'. So, what were our Jewish-Khazars up to during this period?

76. Despair

No; the failure of the attempt to establish a second Khazaria in Russia was not due to mere bad luck. The Jewish Khazars attributed their failure to gain respect and prestige among the people through their personal relationships with the brave and naive prince to the fact that the people of Kiev had not yet forgotten the bitter memories of the campaign of the venerable Pesah. In fact, whilst in Chernigov, Mstislav had fulfilled his debt of gratitude to his Jewish friends from his youth by taking the initiative to have a synagogue built.

Had Metropolitan Illarion's 11th-century document, *Sermon on the Sharia and Forgiveness*, not been preserved to the present day, the chain of events described above could only have been regarded as a figment of the imagination. This small work focused on the forgiveness preached by Christianity in all countries, including Russia, in contrast to the Jewish "Sharia" sent to a single nation. The author emphasised one point in this work: "Judea is silent".

I suspect the current situation prompted the writing of this work. Whilst the Jewish army, led by a Russian prince, was stationed at Chernigov, I do not believe the people of Kiev could have felt at ease. The absence of war does not always signify peace. Direct anti-Jewish agitation amounts to an accusation levelled at a capable Christian writer—

²⁹ Lopatinskiy, *Mstislav Tmutarakanskiy and Rededya on the tales of the Circassians*, pp. 23–26.

³⁰ Mavrodin, V.V. *The Formation of the Old Russian State*. L., 1945, pp. 361.

could have led to this. For this reason, the 'Sermon on Sharia and Forgiveness' only appeared after 1037, that is, following the death of Prince Mstislav.

At that time, the issue was not yet particularly topical, but the author considered it significant and dangerous. For the Jews living amongst Mstislav's comrades-in-arms and his entourage were seeking to make Tmutarakan their homeland. In this situation, the sermon delivered by Illarion—who was, at that time, a simple cleric from Kyiv—was to play the role that fell to him. Indeed, this sermon had imparted a dominant influence that shaped the Kievan people's sense of patriotism and social consciousness. This represented a formidable power. The defenders of Judaism failed not against the swords of the mercenary Varangians, but rather against the social consciousness of the Kievan people and the baptised Slavs, who had chosen Byzantine Orthodoxy and made it the cultural dominant for subsequent Russian generations. There was no place for Jewish views in this culture. It is true that a Jewish colony maintained its existence in Kyiv until 1113 and even possessed a synagogue, but this belonged not to the Khazar Jews, but to Western Jews expelled from Germany.

It has previously been noted that the deterioration of Russo-Jewish relations was caused by attempts to propagate Judaism in Kievan Rus'.³¹ I do not believe this to be true; on the contrary, 'the Jews opposed proselytism with all their might, and... the influence of Judaism began to be seen everywhere precisely because of their direct involvement in this matter'.³² The only way Judaism could spread was through intermarriage, as was the case in Khazaria.

Pagans, who tolerated foreign religions, were quite willing to accept such marriages, but Orthodox clergy vehemently condemned marriage to those of other faiths. However, the Jews had found a shortcut previously tried in Spain and Languedoc: to spread through scepticism and indifferentism, thereby eliminating the ethno-cultural element. This was the principle of the 'Babylonian confusion'. According to the legend, in Babylon 'tongues were confused'; nevertheless, everyone continued to speak Aramaic, but understood the words in different ways. The differences lay only in nuances; yet, no one understood the other, and thus the ethnic groups were born.

31 Malinevskiy, I. *Jews in Southern Russia and Kiev in the 10th–12th Centuries* // Proceedings of the Kiev Theological Academy. Vol. 222, pp. 436–439.

32 Berlin, *Historical Destinies*, p. 153.

However, Jewish propagandists in Kievan Rus' encountered strong opposition from Orthodox clergy. The arguments they held against Christian beliefs were well known to the Byzantines, with whom they had previously debated and argued on these matters. By the 11th century, however, Russian clergy were familiar with the Greek language and Byzantine theology; and the peasants, who were certainly neither foolish nor lazy, also understood this theology.

In his 'Sermon', Illarion accused the Jews of insolence. He wrote that Jesus had not come merely for the 'lost lambs of the house of Israel', nor had he sought to abolish their laws, but had been sent to all people. And in his writing, he also noted that the Jews accused Jesus of being a liar, the son of a sinful woman, and of having been created by the miraculous power of Beelzebub, and... that they tortured him on the cross as if he were the source of all evil.³³

Let us recall what the Khazar rulers did to the Russian allies who returned to the Volga to rest a little and gather supplies following the fierce battles that took place on the southern shores of the Caspian Sea. The Slavs perceived this ingratitude as a natural discord, and consequently as a form of insolence. Their ethnic behavioural patterns did not align with those of either the Jews or the Normans.

Developing the views outlined above, Illarion explained how the Jews had killed their own prophets in the past, arguing that the death of Jesus should not be perceived as a coincidence, but rather as a form of reckoning with those who spoke the truth, because the Jews 'did not love the light' as they 'worshipped the god of darkness'. Continuing his remarks, the same author noted that the 'eradication' of these people—who had stoned their prophets to death—by the Romans was not in vain; to explain his point, he frequently referred back to the era of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and to the period of Moses and the Jewish kings. He adopted a rather positive attitude towards the first group, but expressed a decidedly sceptical view of the second. It seems the people of Kieff had understood what he meant; otherwise, this 'Sermon' would not have been worth writing.

Nevertheless, Judaism still had a chance of success. For Christianity was not yet firmly established on Russian soil. Moreover, the fragmented ma-

33 Rozov, N.N. *The Synodal Catalogue of the Works of Illarion, a 11th-century Russian writer* // Slavica. No. 32. Prague, 1963, pp. 159–160.

Dualistic beliefs, which persisted until the 20th century, had taken the place of the pagan cults. However, the Russians—from the tsar down to the common man—who had the right to choose between religion and irreligion, had opted for the Greek faith. I believe that Jewish propaganda played a catalytic role in the Slavs' and Finno-Ugrians' inclination towards Christianity. However, this by no means diminishes the significance of Metropolitan Illarion's conduct, which pitted a positive worldview against a negative one—that is, a perspective devoid of the higher principles of faith. His service is no less significant than that of Vladimir the Holy and Yaroslav the Wise in bringing Christianity to the land. But the matter that concerns us is another: the static process of ethnogenesis in its dormant phase. *If an ethnos can transition from the illness brought by old age to a period of convalescence, cast aside a culture alien to itself, and resist becoming a chimera, then it prevents the formation of anti-systems on its own soil.* Such was the will of the people to whom Illarion belonged. His fiery lines played the same role for Old Russia as the single phrase “La Belle France!” uttered by a Lothringen shepherd in medieval France. Indeed, it was because of this simple slogan that England lost the Hundred Years' War.

The people's unanimous view is more significant than the sympathies or antipathies of certain princes. For this view not only rejected Judaism, but also opposed intermarriage, which played a prominent role in pagan Khazaria. This is why the attempt by Western European Jews to establish themselves in Russia ended in failure, whilst the attempt by the Khazar Jews was confined to Tmutarakan, which was under the rule of the Russian princes. However, the Jews would try to find a way out there too. They knew how to wait. Indeed, the Asian Kuman people, whom the Russians called the Polovtsians, would intervene in events. Their emergence proved a catastrophe for the Pechenegs and a tragedy for the Guz. They also played a significant role in the Russo-Jewish conflict.

XIII. ON THE STEPPE BORDER (1036– 1061)

77. The Defeat of the Pechenegs at

The Pechenegs are a branch of the ancient 'K'ang' people who lived in the K'ang-chü steppe between the Irtysh and the Aral Sea.¹ Their ancestors are also mentioned in accounts of the Hun-Chinese war that took place in the 2nd century BC.² Consequently, by the 11th century, the Pechenegs were in the final stage of their ethnogenesis, and most likely in a phase of homeostasis.

Of course, the conditions—primarily climatic conditions—were far from favourable for the Kangli. They had settled in an extremely barren region, and as a result, the droughts of the 3rd and 10th centuries dealt a severe blow to their economy.³ And because of this drought, some of the Kangli would migrate to other countries. For example, in 889, a branch known as the 'Paçınak' (Pechenegs) had arrived in the Black Sea region, where they had endured hard times, as soon as the droughts began. Once the steppe had greened again, the sheep had fattened and the horses had grown strong, the Pechenegs adapted to their natural surroundings. For an ethnic group, in its homeostatic phase, is inseparable from the biosphere that surrounds it. Thus, the Pechenegs began a cultural exchange with their neighbours. For during the famine of the 10th century, the steppe dwellers had no time to concern themselves with culture. However, once the threat of famine had passed in the 11th century, they could begin to reflect on the meaning of life and the choice of neighbours.

Like the Russians, the Pechenegs had a limited range of choices, and these were the options offered by the Orthodox, the Latins and the Muslims

1 Grjimaýlo, *Zapadnaya*, Vol. II, p. 119.

2 Gumilev, *The Huns*, pp. 131, 170–173.

3 Gumilev, *Heterochrony*, pp. 62–71; also *Heterochrony and the Formation of Eurasia*, pp. 81–90; also: *The Role of Climate*, pp. 53–66.

These were the options. If none of these were chosen, it was possible to adhere to the old traditions.

X. In the 11th century, the Pechenegs were 'the most rigid and obstinate of all the pagans'. The Catholic missionary Bruno, who had converted a mere 30 Pechenegs in half a year, also described them in this manner.⁴ However, in the 11th century, specifically after 1010, the following events took place: "... After the year 400 AH, a Muslim captive had fallen into their midst. He was a theologian. He explained the Islamic faith to them, and as a result, they embraced Islam. As their intentions were sincere, the Islamic faith began to spread amongst them. The rest did not accept Islam and reproached those who had become Muslims. This led to conflict breaking out amongst them. Although the number of Muslims was 12,000 and the polytheists were twice as numerous, Allah granted victory to the Muslims. And they (the Muslims) killed the others. Those who survived accepted Islam. Now they are all Muslims. They have imams, muftis and reciters among them".⁵

Rather than interpreting this situation as a confessional development, the Byzantines viewed it as the result of a mere feud between Kegen, the commander-in-chief who had defeated the Guz people on numerous occasions, and Tirah, the leader of the Pecheneg alliance. The defeated Kegen fled to Byzantium with his followers and converted to Christianity there.⁶ Garnati, a 12th-century author, notes that the majority of the Pechenegs were Muslim.⁷

The dates of these events are not recorded in the sources; however, by comparing the dates of the battles with changes in the moisture levels of the steppe region, we can identify the precise information we seek. Let us conduct a brief preliminary analysis.

High humidity is a blessing for arid steppes. This is because the spread of the vegetation that provides the necessary food for cattle and horses depends on it. At the same time, this also means a rapid increase in military strength. Nomads attack their neighbours to protect their homelands and herds, and these events are recorded in chronicles. This

4 *Monuments of the History of the Kievan State, 9th–12th Centuries*. Moscow, 1936, pp. 76–77.

5 Kunik, A., Rozen, V. *Reports by al-Bekri and Other Authors on Rus' and the Slavs*, Vol. I, pp. 58–60.

6 Vasilevskiy, V. G. *Byzantium and the Pechenegs* // *Trudy*. Vol. 2. St Petersburg, 1908, p. 11.

7 Bolshakov, O. G., Mongayt, A. L. *The Travels of Abu Hamid al-Garnati in Eastern and Central Europe (1131–1153)*. Moscow, 1971.

Conversely, in humid regions, constant rainfall spells poverty for agriculture. This is because the crops fail to ripen and simply rot in the soil.

Consequently, if the lands within the belt between the 45th and 50th parallel north remain under the influence of high humidity, this creates optimal conditions for the steppes around the Black Sea, but pessimal conditions in Western Europe.

In the 10th century, Atlantic low-pressure systems passing between the Volga and Oka rivers caused the water level of the Caspian Sea to rise by 3 metres. In other words, the rains had watered only Northern Scotland and Southern Scandinavia in Europe; whilst England, France, Italy and Germany had been scorched by the sun, suffering shortages of grain and grapes. However,

the shift of the cyclones further south at the beginning of the 11th century was immediately noted by the chroniclers of the time.

“Famine had laid the country waste in 1027, and the human race faced a grave threat. Weather conditions had deteriorated to such an extent that there was not a single moment’s respite—neither to sow crops nor to harvest them, owing to the floods. It was as though all manner of calamities had been unleashed, as if they were competing with one another to carry out God’s command to punish mankind for their sins. So much rain fell across the entire earth that, in the end, not a single patch of suitable soil could be found for sowing for three years. Even in the most fertile lands, the wheat yield was at best one in six. This scourge of vengeance lashed through the East, emptying Greece, then Italy in its wake. It subsequently laid waste to the whole of Wales and, finally, England. The scourge’s blows made no distinction. The powerful landowners, along with the middle classes and the poor, all tasted the bitterness of famine. Everyone wasted away. Even the barons’ rapes and tyranny came to an end in the face of this famine. If anyone wished to sell a loaf of bread, they would demand the highest price and take whatever they wanted without any difficulty. Almost everywhere, a loaf of bread was sold for sixty shillings. Sometimes even a sixth of a loaf went for fifteen shillings. After all the herds and poultry had been eaten and all the stocks had run out, the hunger became so intense that people began to eat carrion and even disgusting things to quell their rumbling stomachs. Sometimes, to avoid starving to death, they would dig up tree roots from underground and gather grass from the riverbanks. However,

“It was all in vain, and only God could quell God’s wrath.”⁸

What was a ‘disaster’ for the French, Anglo-Saxons and Italians had become a ‘blessing’ for the Cumans, Turks, ‘Black Caps’ and Pechenegs. The summer rains boosted their military strength to such an extent that the policies of all the nomads, and particularly the Pechenegs, underwent a complete reversal from 1027 onwards.

In 1036, the Pechenegs suddenly attacked Russia and laid siege to Kyiv. Yet they had been living in peace and tranquillity for fifteen years. Their attack was therefore entirely unexpected. Nevertheless, Kyiv held out until Yaroslav arrived from Novgorod with the Varangians and Slovenes. The battle took place where St. Sophia’s Cathedral stands today and lasted the entire day. The Pechenegs were defeated and driven away from the Russian borders for good. Consequently, the three attacks launched against Byzantium that same year were also successful.

The change of religion also led to political upheaval; the political balance that had been established with immense effort in Eastern Europe was thrown into disarray. Bulgaria, which had been left vulnerable by the conquests of the Komnenos dynasty (1001–1019), could no longer serve as a barrier between Constantinople and the Pechenegs, who had been emboldened by reports that the Seljuks were also marching on Byzantium from the east. This shift in the balance of power alone suffices to explain the suicide attacks launched by the Pechenegs against the Byzantine northern borders in 1046. The former energetic emperors—Nikephoros Phokas, John Tzimiskes and Basil Bulgaroboyos—would have found it easier to deal with these invasions than Svyatoslav, but times had changed, and Constantine Monomachos would find himself facing volunteer Pecheneg units before the walls of Constantinople in 1051, following several heavy defeats.

For the forty years following this event, the Pechenegs living on the Balkan Peninsula were a dagger in the side of the Byzantines. Indeed, the empire’s fate teetered on the brink of disaster on several occasions. Death lurked on the slopes overlooking both shores of the Bosphorus in Constantinople. For on one side roamed the Seljuks, and on the other the Pechenegs. In 1091, the Kipchak khans Tugorkan and Bonyak, who routed the Pecheneg army off the coast of Leburn,

8 See Baskin M. “Molot vedm” as a classic example of medieval worldview // Schrenger Ya and Inistoris. *Molot vedm.*, pp. 61–62.

saved Byzantium from the gallows. Subsequently, the Guz and Kuman peoples divided the Pecheneg lands between themselves. These two peoples bore no resemblance whatsoever to the Pechenegs; that is, their relations with them resembled those they established with foreigners. The threat posed by Islam to Byzantium and Catholic Russia persisted for a full three centuries.

78. The End of the Empires

What is this thing called the ‘End of the Ages’? Our contemporaries are awaiting it, but they cannot seem to notice it because it has passed over the course of decades rather than a few days. For instance, the Catholics waited for 1,000 years, believing the apocalypse would come, but as it did not, the matter was forgotten.⁹ However, something else happened: the Christian world’s church split in two after 1,000 years; the last remnants of the great migrations were wiped off the map, and—as will be discussed later—a fierce war began between the Islamic world and the “Christian world”. Although this recent deviation may have clouded the judgement of our contemporaries, the shift in rhythm has not escaped our notice.

The aspect that captures our attention most is the period when super-ethnic groups, whose full dimensions we have identified, coexisted and mutually influenced one another. The most dangerous of these were the Rus-Slavic and Byzantine super-ethnic groups that emerged in Eastern Europe during the 2nd–4th centuries. Both were reaping the fruits of the cultural trees planted by their ancestors and were in the third phase of ethnogenesis. The Arabic-speaking Islamic world that emerged in the 6th–7th centuries, the Rajputs in India and the Song dynasties in China were younger ethnic groups. They had undergone a period of intense development and, as a characteristic of the third stage, had expended and consumed a significant portion of their defensive energy.

⁹ It should be noted that categorical designation rarely occurred. The Roman Emperor Philip the Arab proclaimed his capital the ‘eternal city’, yet 200 years later Rome was destroyed by the Goths and Vandals, thus bringing the Western Roman Empire to an end, unlike the Eastern (Byzantine) Empire. The Jews rejected the idea of accepting the Prophet Muhammad as the Messiah, stating that the Mahdi would come five hundred years later. The Muslims, however, waited; but when nothing happened, they invited the Jews to Islam.

The Western European super-ethnos, which had shattered the iron yoke of the Early Carolingian Empire and, in the 9th century, developed life patterns suited to itself—such as medieval nationalities and feudal institutions—was in its ascendant phase. It had accumulated so much energy over two hundred years that it could now break out of its defensive line and attack wherever it pleased. In 11th-century Spain, the power of the Arabs—who were later forced to summon the savage Tavarīq from Africa—had been shattered. At the same time, in England, the Anglo-Saxon Kingdom—a remnant of the Great Migrations—had been eradicated. In Germany, attacks against the Slavic Lutici and Bodriči had begun. As for Italy, whilst the French Normans were driving the Muslims out of Sicily, the Byzantines had also been pushed back from Apulia. However, religious tensions would continue to grow, and the Crusades would come to the fore.

XI. By the end of the century, all four khanates in Eastern Europe had ceased to exist. We had witnessed the fate of the Khazars. The fate of the Hungarians, the successors of the Avar Khanate, was somewhat different. For it was not defeats but victories that had brought about their downfall. Following their campaigns into the heart of Europe, the Magyars had taken many female prisoners of war: Spaniards, French, Germans, Italians, Slavs and Greeks... Naturally, over time, these women gave birth to thousands of children. It is well known that children are brought up by their mothers from a young age, and later, through military training, become warriors. This was the case here too, and moreover, both the military and the vernacular were Hungarian. However, those who spoke this language were members of different ethnic groups in the midst of a passionate rise. These new Hungarians could not bring themselves to love the elderly nomadic and pagan Hungarians who had once caused their mothers and grandmothers grief. Their numbers grew with every victory and campaign. By the year 1000, their time had finally come. King Stephen had permitted a monarchist revolution, that is, by stripping the elderly Magyar chieftains of their authority, banning the old religion, and adopting Catholicism. Those who supported him were the children of war captives and female captives. Thus, in the 11th century, the Hungarian Khanate transformed into a kingdom composed of Europeans who had replaced the native language with Hungarian.

The situation in Bulgaria was even worse. The wars with the Byzantine Empire between 1001 and 1019 had brought it to the brink of collapse. However, although the Bulgarian Khaganate was completely eradicated, it would be reborn in 1185, though this time as a Wallachian-Slavic kingdom steeped in local cultural traditions.

Russia's turn towards Byzantium from the time of Olga and Vladimir onwards yielded some positive results; however, these were reassessed during the reign of Yaroslav the Wise. The reason for this lay primarily in certain internal changes taking place within the Byzantine Empire itself; however, relations with Catholic Europe had also developed; and ethnic processes within Russia had compelled the administration to seek new solutions. The combination of all these factors not only led to certain political changes for the Russians, but also brought about a series of changes for the Polovtsians (Kipchaks), Turks, Khazars and Khazar Jews in their vicinity. However, the reactions of these peoples to the aforementioned changes would fundamentally alter the entire history of Eastern Europe. To fully grasp the issue, we need to examine, one by one, all the countries that were in some way connected to the events of this pivotal period.

Following the death of Basil (1025), his brother—and the fool of fools—Constantine VIII succeeded him; just as he had replaced the most capable men in his entourage with a horde of sycophants, he had gathered around him those who advised him to make the people groan under the burden of taxes for the sake of the army. Yet it was nothing short of a miracle that the army managed to secure victory by relying on any power at all.

The heir to the throne was Zoe, a woman in her fifties who had married for the third time, captivated solely by the men's good looks and heedless of their foolishness and incompetence. Her first husband, Romanos III Argiros, had been drowned in the bath; her second husband, Michael IV, had died of grief; and her third husband, Michael V Kalaphatos, had been blinded and removed from power. Only her fourth husband, Constantine IX Monomachos, would outlive this wicked empress (1050) and pass away during a general famine and epidemic (1055). Power passed to Zoe's nun sister Theodora, and she, in turn, would bequeath it to the 'fussy' Michael Stratiotikos, who was overthrown by rebellious military officers in 1057, shortly before her own death in 1056. However, when the commander Isaac Komnenos took a fancy to the priesthood, the throne passed to Constantine Doukas. Doukas, following in his ancestors' footsteps in politics, had slaughtered the people to prevent them from posing a threat, eliminated the most capable commanders, and had become conceited due to the flattery of the sycophants he had gathered around him.

The Byzantine Empire's power had waned, but the level of inertia that had built up over the preceding 150 years was so high that the disaster would have been averted

and cease to pose a threat. Regeneration is possible during the inertia phase of ethnogenesis. In Byzantium, those who led the way were the provincials who did not squander their energy in the capital's entertainment districts. Constant warfare was less harmful than the rise of luxury.

The accession to the throne of the obscure figures briefly mentioned above explains why Byzantium began to lose its standing among its neighbours, particularly the Russians, whilst still in the early stages of this phase. Yaroslav the Wise decided in 1043 to seek other allies and approached King Henry III of Germany and the Holy Roman Emperor (1039–1056); he found it appealing to offer his daughter's hand in marriage to Henry III.¹⁰

His behaviour had caused widespread discontent, as it had clearly trampled the Russian state's reputation underfoot. As if that were not enough, Yaroslav, forgetting his 'wisdom', had declared war on Byzantium on the pretext that a Russian merchant had been killed during a quarrel in the market. The army was commanded by his son, Vladimir. However, when the Russian fleet was set ablaze by Byzantine fire and the surviving ships, in a wretched state, sought refuge on shore, they were forced to surrender by the Byzantine army waiting there, and the campaign ended in defeat. The prisoners had their eyes gouged out and returned in a crippled state. It seems, then, that Byzantium was still a formidable opponent for Russia.

Yaroslav continued to seek allies in Europe and, in 1043, managed to secure the release of 800 Russian captives by marrying his sister to Boleslav, King of Poland. Subsequently, he married his daughter Anastasia to King Andrew I of Hungary, Elizabeth to King Gardrad III of Norway, and Anna to King Henry I of France, he arranged for his son Izyaslav to marry the daughter of the Queen of Poland, and for Svyatoslav to marry a German countess, whilst marrying only Vsevolod to the daughter of Constantine Monomakh. In this marriage diplomacy, the Catholic European side had clearly gained the upper hand.

Russia's severing of its ecclesiastical ties with Byzantium took place in 1051, when Yaroslav appointed Saint Hilarion—author of the work we discussed earlier, *Sermon on the Law and Forgiveness*—as Archbishop of Kiev. In the same year, the priest Anthony founded the Kiev-Pechora Monastery, which would later become the stronghold of Russian Christianity. Around the same time, the Archdiocese of Gerek was also choosing the Church of Hagia Sophia as its base.

¹⁰ Pașuto, *Foreign Policy*, p. 123.

Such a shift in the Grand Prince's policy could not have been a mere display of stupidity on the part of the administration. Judging by the administration's decision to send Russian troops on a hopeless campaign against Constantinople, there was intense hostility towards the Byzantines in Russia. Mikhail Psellus, a Byzantine civil servant and writer who witnessed these events, attributes the attack carried out by the Russians in 1043 to an ancient enmity. "This barbarian tribe," writes Psellus, "has always regarded the Roman state with hatred and malice; consequently, it was constantly on the lookout for a pretext to wage war against us."¹¹

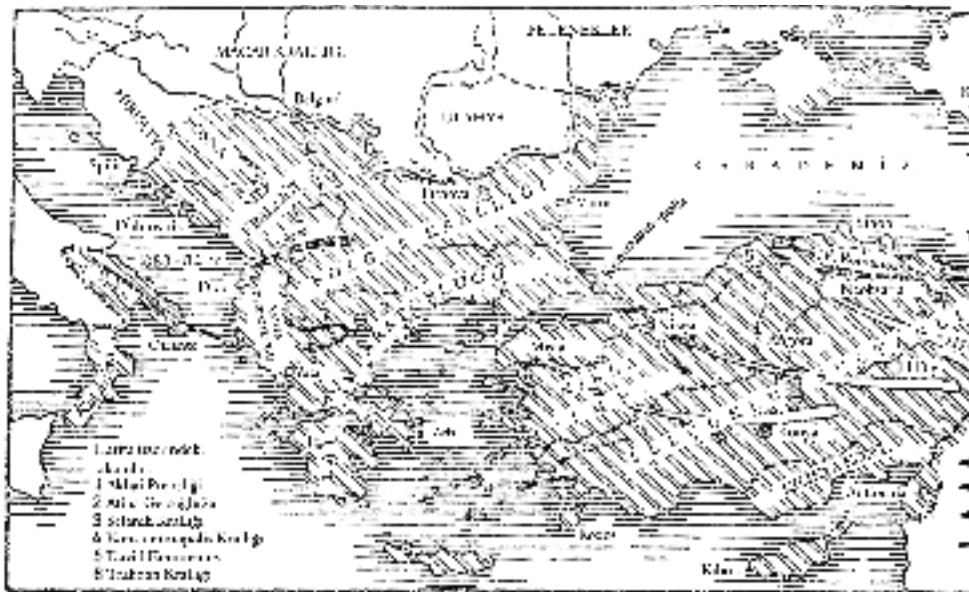
Psellus was mistaken! For the Russian Varangian (Vareg) regiment fought for Christianity and the Byzantine Empire in Syria and Italy from 988 to 1081. There was a strong admiration for the Greeks in Russia, but during this period of upheaval, this admiration turned into outright antipathy. Consequently, the Russians' turn towards the West around 1043 must be regarded as an isolated incident from the past. As previously noted, the first pro-Western figure among the Russians was Svyatopolk Oka-yanniy. However, he was supported only by the Poles and the Jews who walked hand in hand with them. Yet, during Svyatopolk's second coronation ceremony in 1018, the Russian warriors who had placed him on the throne in Kyiv attacked the Jews living in the city, burning and destroying their homes. The people of Kyiv had completely changed their stance towards the Grand Prince and had killed the Poles who had been appointed to office. Faced with this situation, Svyatopolk was forced to seek refuge with the Pechenegs. For neither the soldiers nor the people of Kyiv supported him any longer.

From this we understand that not all the people of Kievan Rus' hated the Greeks, nor did they hold the Catholics in high esteem. Consequently, here we encounter a pro-Greek faction that chose Vsevolod Yaroslavich—who would later become Prince of Pereyaslavl—as their commander.

So, who founded this anti-Greek faction? This faction was so powerful that it was prepared to risk war over the death of a single man during a skirmish. Yet such incidents were commonplace and could have been settled by blood money. It is reasonable to assume that the Greeks, bearing in mind the high cost of war, offered to pay blood money

11 Mikhail Psellus. *Chronograph*. Translation, introductory article and notes by Q.N. L[barsky]. Moscow, 1978, p. 95.

12 This information is found in Długosz's chronicle. See Berlin, *Istoričeskie sud*, p. 159.



XI. Y.ıl Başlarında Bizans İmparatorluğu

It is necessary. A. A. Shakhmatov¹³ and D. S. Likhachev¹⁴ note that the initiative to launch the attack lay not with the Russians, but with their enemies, the Varangians, who drove them into the arms of disaster.

Among the Varangians who launched this hopeless and senseless war was a man named Ingvar the Traveller. Abandoning the Russians, who had been washed ashore by storms following their defeat, he set off for 'Serkland'¹⁵—that is, Serir in the Caucasus—hoping to find easier plunder there. Approximately 3,000 Varangians advanced along the River Rion; however, they were defeated by the Georgians, namely Liparit and King Bagrat IV.¹⁶ It has not been established whether Ingvar died there or elsewhere. But that is not the point; rather, it is significant that the princes of Kiev ceased to believe in the invincibility of the Varangians and thus avoided war with the Greeks.

However, there were people among the Russians who disliked both the Greeks and the Germans, and their numbers were by no means small. Yet people were friendly—

¹³ Shakhmatov, *Raziskania*, pp. 226–228.

¹⁴ See *PM*, ch. 22, pp. 378–379.

¹⁵ Melnikova Y. A. *The Expedition of the Ingrian Traveller to the East and the Russian Campaign against Byzantium in 1043* // Scandinavian Collection. Vol. 21. 1976, pp. 74–88.

¹⁶ Papaskivi, Z. V. "The 'Varangians' in the Georgian 'Chronicle of Kartli' and Certain Issues of Russian-Georgian Contacts in the 11th Century." // *Istoriq SSSR*. 1981, No. 3, pp. 164–172.



Since they could not survive without them, they too turned towards the East, where not only Nestorians but also Christians lived. For example, in 1048, there was an archiepiscopal centre in Merv to which the Central Asian Catholics were attached.¹⁷ It was this party that had chosen Svyatoslav Yaroslavich, who would later become Prince of Chernigov, as their leader.

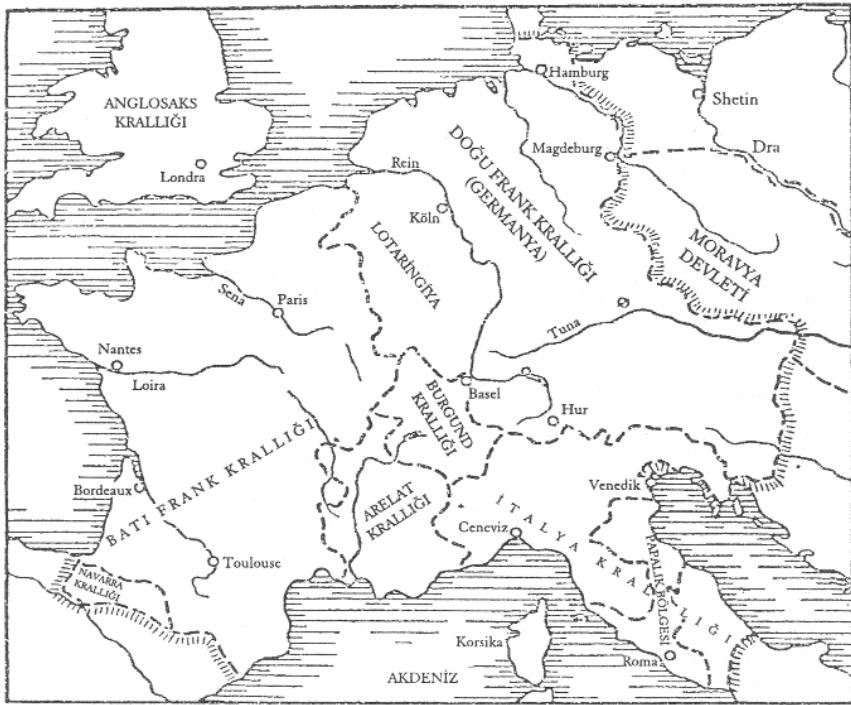
The schism of the churches in 1054 had isolated the pro-Western Russians from Catholic countries. This was because embracing Latinism was interpreted in Kiev as tantamount to apostasy. However, Yaroslav, who was in need of money, his son Izyaslav and his grandson II.

Svyatopolk intended to place under his protection the German Jewish colonies that facilitated the Kievan princes' connections with Catholic Europe. The Jews obtained the money that fell into the prince's treasury from the local population, who were distressed that "all their trades had been taken from the Christians and that, having enjoyed complete freedom and sovereignty during Svyatopolk's reign, many merchants and craftsmen had breathed their last".¹⁸ Although the same source states that the Jews "adapted many things to their own laws"¹⁹, it is unclear how this information should be interpreted. This may well be a slander; but the fact that religious debates took place and that Catholics were disparaged is also confirmed by another writer, Theodisius of Pechersk, who engaged in regular debates in certain assemblies with Jews who "were almost ready to kill themselves because they believed in Christ". We shall see later that his views were absurd, but the role he played in supporting Izyaslav and the respect he commanded among the people spared Theodisius from wearing the crown of thorns.

17 Bartold, V. V. *On Christianity in Turkestan during the Pre-Mongol Period*. St Petersburg, 1893, p. 11.

18 Tatishchev, V. N. *History of Russia*. Vol. II, p. 29. See also: Kuzmin, A. G. 'The Entry for the Year 1113 in V. N. Tatishchev's "History of Russia"' // *Bulletin of Moscow State University*. History, 1972, No. 4, pp. 79-89.

19 Tatishchev, *History of Russia*, II/129.



XI. y. yilda Avrupa

It is noteworthy that the population was divided into several groups, the base of which was formed by different sub-ethnic groups; for Catholicism experienced its zenith in Russia only during the time of Vladimir Monomakh. Although political unity followed religious unity, Christianity united the peoples of Eastern Europe. Further information on this subject will be provided below.

79. Significant Changes in the ‘ ’

When Yaroslav the Wise, who defeated the Poles, the Yotvingians, the Chuds and the Pechenegs, established laws, pioneered reforms and freed the Russian churches from Byzantine domination, died in 1054, he left behind a country in turmoil. Indeed, within Russia's borders and in the interior—

Events had unfolded in the lands, the outcome of which could never be predicted.

Despite the vast extent of the territories that recognised Kievan rule, it was unexpected that Yaroslav could not defeat the small Principality of Polotsk. On the contrary, he had ceded the fortresses of Vitebsk and Usvyat, which had been a constant thorn in his side, to Bryachislav, the grandson of Vladimir. It was only Yaroslav's sons—Izyaslav and his brothers—who, in 1066, would defeat Vseslav Bryachislavich of Polotsk on the banks of the Némiga River, capture him, and imprison him in Kyiv. However, Vseslav was rescued by Kiev rebels on 15 September 1068; he would rule as prince in Kiev for seven months, but, facing pressure from King Boleslav II of Poland, who had reached the height of his power, he would return to Polotsk and make several unsuccessful attempts to secure his homeland's independence.

The appearance of the Guz or Tork tribes—formerly allies of Svyatoslav but now his enemies—on the borders of Southern Russia in 1049 was a completely unexpected event. The wars with the Torki continued until 1060, when they were finally defeated by the allied armies formed by the Russian princes and driven back to the Danube. In 1064, the Torki attempted to cross the Danube and seek refuge with the Franks, but due to an epidemic and the hostility of their age-old enemies, the Pechenegs, they returned to Kyiv and sought asylum from the prince. Thus, the Torks, who settled on the right bank of the Dnieper along Russia's southern borders, became loyal allies of the Prince of Volhynia against the Polovtsians, the third nomadic people following in their wake. This subject warrants further detail, but for now, let us return to the internal affairs of Russia.

The reigns of Olga, Vladimir and Yaroslav, who drew their strength from the Slavic-Russian sub-ethnic group descended from the Polans, had established a vast geographical unity by bringing all the peoples in the regions stretching from the Carpathians to the Upper Volga and from Lake Ladoga to the Black Sea under their rule. Following the death of Yaroslav the Wise, those who ruled Kyiv were no longer in a position to maintain this unity; and although power had granted certain privileges to the Rurik dynasty, they were compelled to adopt a federal system. The heir apparent princes divided the cities among themselves according to their ages. Izyaslav took Kiev and Novgorod; Svyatoslav, the Chernigov and Seversk regions; Vsevolod, a part of the Pereyaslavl and Rostov-Suzdal territories; Vyacheslav, Smolensk; and Igor, Vladi-

mir-Volyn. According to the law known as the 'Yaroslav Law', the throne passed from the eldest brother to the next youngest, but in the event of the death of all the brothers, it passed to the eldest nephew.²⁰

What is this: the rise or the fall of the Passioner tension system? Let us see.

Where the level of passion declines, the unique formation of the ethnic group and the process of original cultural structuring begins. Where the level of passion declines but inert systems remain strong, systems adopted from neighbours come into play; conversely, where inertia has faded, customary social institutions capable of adequately meeting the needs of an intensive agricultural economy are preserved. Consequently, Eastern Europe was divided between the Byzantine cultural colony's 'urban economy' and the 'rural economy', which gradually seized the initiative in political life. Indeed, Yaroslav's problem was to contend with this very contradiction.

Fortunately, as there were a considerable number of Passionists in Russia, they had spread to distant cities, crossing the borders of the Principality of Kyiv and thereby preventing the geographical division of the lands. The three major cities—Kyiv, Chernihiv and Pereyaslavl—were established in regions very close to one another; however, as the surrounding towns did not wish to separate from the metropolises, they accepted the principality's orders without objection. The three princes in these three cities were also in contact with the Kyiv factions. Izyaslav was pro-German; Vsevolod, pro-Greek; and Svyatoslav, pro-Russian. As for the younger brothers, Vyacheslav and Igor, they were obscure figures who departed the political stage prematurely.

As noted above, the ruling class is always dependent on the will of the people around them. Rulers succeed based on the loyal service of those around them and their own abilities, without regard for their own interests. Among the knàz rulers, however, there were more such people than among all other monarchs. Like the prince, it was the city that sustained the druzhina. A druzhina comprised hundreds of warriors, whilst a prince's army numbered in the tens of thousands. Consequently, power lay in the hands of the townspeople, who could dictate their own patterns of behaviour to the princes. In short, the princes' policies were dictated by the interests of those who sustained the people around them

20 Solovyev, S. M. *Relations between the Princes of the Rurik Dynasty*. Moscow, 1847; Presnakov, A. Y., *Princely Law in Ancient Rus': Essays on the History of the 10th–13th Centuries*. St Petersburg, 1909; Gumilev, L. N. 'The feudal-tribal system among the Turks in the 6th–8th centuries' // *Soviet Ethnography*. 1959. No. 3, pp. 11–25.

...was bound by it. As this was the only way for the knàzs to maintain their existence, they could not stray from the path laid out for them. Consequently, the passivity of any given knàz depended on his personal abilities...

80. The Emergence of the Kipchaks' ‘ ‘

“Nothing ever truly ends” – since “beginning” and “end” are always intertwined, this is how our contemporaries view all historical events. However, viewed from a very broad perspective, it is possible to distinguish between them. Consequently, the emergence of the Seljuks in Iran and Asia Minor, and of the Polovtsians around the Black Sea, has been regarded by 11th-century historians as the next variations in the balance of power. However, an ethnologist who is knowledgeable about the ancient histories of these peoples and aware of their subsequent fates can identify their places, demonstrate what they signified for their neighbours and descendants, and illustrate this within the framework of general cultural genesis and regional ethnogenesis processes.

The Turkic peoples were ‘mature’ ethnic groups by the 11th century. Having emerged in the 3rd century BC alongside the Huns and Sarmatians, they had passed through all stages of ethnogenesis and had become established as stable communities. They appeared to be doomed to extinction, but the exact opposite occurred. The Persian historian Ravendi, whilst describing the Seljuk sultan Keyhüsrev, who reigned between 1192 and 1196, states: “Praise be to God, for in the lands of the Arabs, Persians, Byzantines and Russians, the word (in the sense of sovereignty – L.G.) belongs to the Turks. The fear of their swords lives in the hearts of the neighbouring peoples.”²¹

Indeed, that was the case. Ibn Hassul, who had served as an official in the former Ghaznavid Empire, wrote the following about the Turks in a work he composed against the Daylamites as early as the 11th century: “The Turks are like lions. They are brave, self-sacrificing and patient. They detest hypocrisy and dislike intrigue; they do not enjoy flattery. They are fond of plunder and displays of power; they are proud; they do not pursue luxury, but they do not like housework (not always, however – L. G.) and they love to give orders”.²²

21 Bosworth K. E. *The Invasions of the Barbarians: The Appearance of the Turks in the Muslim World* // *The Muslim World 950–1150*. Moscow, 1981, p. 33.

22 Ibid., p. 24.

All these were the high virtues ascribed to them by their settled neighbours. However, the following qualities—which are linked to a high degree of passivity—were absent from the list: ambition, patriotism unto death, initiative, a love of duty, a rejection of selfishness, creativity, and the zeal to rebuild the world anew. All these qualities had remained in the past, among the Huns and the ancestors of the Turks. Their descendants, however, were adaptable. They were favoured in states; they were far removed from the despised traits of sub-passion. The Turks' boundless passion was something the Arabs, Persians, Georgians and Greeks sought but could not find.

However, the Turkic peoples could never get along with one another. The blood feuds characteristic of the steppes cost the lives of heroes, yet brought no victory. For the places of the fallen were filled by newly emerging heroes. *Passionate peoples may triumph and succeed; but as the years pass, nothing remains of them.*

A lack of passion never permits war or conquest. It is not the absolute level that matters, but rather the boundary between the different levels. For instance, although pursuing victory at the cost of one's life is a characteristic trait of the Turks, for their indolent descendants, the passion of the Mâverâünnehir peasant was never sufficient to inspire a desire to start a family or to tend to his fields and orchards; indeed, the very notion was unthinkable. The situation in Iran and Iraq was even worse. There lived a large, apathetic segment of the population who had grown accustomed to living off the wealth left by their ancestors, yet lacked the strength not only to defend their own country but even to pursue their personal ambitions. Only the Daylamites had retained a military capability comparable to that of the Turks, but their numbers were very few. This is why, in 999, the wealthy Samanid Emirate fell prey to the Turkish tribes of the Yagma and Chigil as spoils of war, whilst Hotan and Kashgar were occupied by the Karluk Turks who had embraced Islam; Khwarezm came under the rule of the Kangli (Pecheneg) tribes. The Arabs and Persians, meanwhile, had become subjects with no rights whatsoever in their own lands (!).

However, a completely different situation had emerged on the western fringes of the Great Steppe. For in the 11th century, the Russians were in the inertial phase of their ethnogenesis; that is to say, they were the passionate Turkic nomads who had scattered from the steppe—which had dried up entirely by the 10th century—to the banks of the Don, Dnieper, Bug and Danube.

As we mentioned earlier, the steppe between the Altai Mountains and the Caspian Sea was a region where the Guz (Tork), Kangli (Pecheneg) and Kuman (Polovtsian, Kipchak) peoples were constantly at war with one another. Until the 10th century, the strength of these three peoples was roughly equal, and each possessed its own territory. However, when drought scorched the steppe belt in the 10th century, the Guz and Kangli peoples living on the shores of the Aral Sea suffered greater damage than the Kuman peoples living on the foothills of the Altai and the water-rich banks of the Irtysh. The streams gushing from the mountains and the Irtysh River had enabled them to maintain their herds of cattle and horses—the fundamental military strength of a nomadic society. However, when the steppe vegetation spread southwards and south-westwards again in the 11th century, the Cumans followed this belt and easily overpowered the Guz and Pechenegs who stood in their way, though the latter had been weakened by drought. In the south, their path was almost completely cut off by the Betpak-Dala Desert, but in the west, just as in Baraba, the fertile steppes irrigated by the Don and Dnieper stretched out before them. By 1055, the conquering Polovtsians had advanced as far as the Russian borders.²³

As the Polovtsians and the Torki were the common enemies of both sides, they initially formed an alliance with Vsevolod Yaroslavich. However, after defeating the Torki, the allies turned against one another, and in 1061, the Polovtsian khan Iskal defeated Vsevolod. It must be acknowledged that both sides viewed this war as a border skirmish, yet the routes across the steppe had become safe. Consequently, Tmutarakan's relations with Russia would deteriorate, leading to numerous significant events.

23 Not all the Polovtsians migrated westwards. The main groups remained in Siberia and Kazakhstan. They had scattered as far as the shores of Lakes Zaysan and Tengiz. However, as was always the case, the most active contingent—having defeated the Guz and Pechenegs—had migrated to clash with the Russians.

XIV. THE LOST YEARS (1061– 1115)

81. The Blue Seas

Life in medieval Tmutarakan was certainly far from dull. Ships gliding across the Black Sea carried brocaded fabrics, sweet wines and sharp swords, and on their return journeys, they were laden with Scythian wheat and leather. Boats brimming to the brim with silvery fish from the Sea of Azov would pull up to the quays. To the east, herds of cattle and sheep grazed, and in the coniferous forests, wary wolves would occasionally roam. But above it all stretched a cloudless, deep-blue sky.

The people here were diverse too. Those known as the ‘Hazar’ wore long-skirted dresses and adorned their long, braided hair with gold rings; they would go quietly to the synagogues to perform their customary religious rites and await the end of their days. In the squares, the Kasogs [Circassians] from the Kuban rode about on majestic horses; the steppe-dwelling Yases [Alans], meanwhile, were taking their sheep to market to sell. The few Russians stood out in this crowd with their beards, the tips of which were dyed red. They were the city’s rulers, and the Church of the Holy Trinity, built during the reign of Mstislav, stood out like a ring with a brow amidst the city’s houses.

The inhabitants of this city were not strangers to one another; yet they were not eager to mix and mingle. Nevertheless, according to M. I. Artamonov, by the 11th century, two political factions had merged in Tmutarakan. One of these was composed of local warriors and defended the political independence of the city and its surroundings. The other group, which M. I. Artamonov mistakenly referred to as ‘Russian’, favoured the development of trade relations with Byzantium and Russia. The main body of this group was made up of the Khazars, who were adherents of Judaism.¹

1 Artamonov, *The Khazars*, p. 442.

Three princes ruled in Russia, and maintaining good relations with one of them meant severing ties with the others. The rivalries between the princes had already begun as early as 1060. Nikon, a monk at the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra – who is the first of the well-known Russian chroniclers in history – fled to Prince Gleb Svyatoslavich of Tmutarakan to escape the wrath of Prince Izyaslav, and there he managed to evade the Grand Prince's pursuit.

It is also significant to consider the possibility that the name 'Nikon' here refers to Illarion, the first Russian metropolitan and defender of the Russian national churches.³ If this is correct, then the conflict between the Western-oriented faction and the Russian faction began in 1060; if not, however, the earliest date would be 1073.

So, which group supported Gleb Svyatoslavich in Tmutarakan? It is known that the Steppe peoples remained neutral towards the Polovtsians during the period of friendship between the Yas and Kasog tribes. This implies that those opposed to Svyatoslavich were the Jewish group. What, then, was this group after?

In 1064, the outcast Prince Rostislav Vladimirovich had fled from Novgorod to Tmutarakan. In short, he had fled, but it was not clear from whom. However, as soon as he settled in Tmutarakan, his first act was to expel Gleb. Yet, as he had no warriors of his own, he had only two travelling companions with him. In this situation, there must have been a powerful group in the city supporting him, and given that there were only two such groups, it is not difficult to guess who his supporters were. In 1065, Svyatoslav arrived in Tmutarakan with an army and restored Gleb to the throne. Rostislav, in this situation, left the city and, as soon as Svyatoslav departed, returned and expelled Gleb once more. He then imposed taxes on the Kasogs and other tribes. But this time, the Jewish faction would win the struggle again. That is, of course, unless the Greeks—who were absolutely determined to prevent the Jews from gaining strength along the Black Sea coast—had intervened. The bloody Passover massacres were still fresh in people's minds, and Rostislav was, after all, the son of the general who had set out to burn and destroy Constantinople as recently as 1043. The situation looked rather tense, but...

2 PL. H. 22, p. 85.

3 Priselkov, *Essays*, pp. 181–184.

4 One of them was Porey, the voivode of Kiev, and the other was Višata, the son of Ost-romir, the voivode of Novgorod. They had relatives among the Rus' population of Tmutarakan, and consequently this situation made the outcast prince a valuable ally of the Jews.

In 1066, he had visited Rostislav, the strategos of the Khersones theme, as a guest and poisoned him during a banquet. Seven days later, Prince Rostislav died, and with his death, Jewish rule in Tmutarakan breathed its last. The chronicle states that this strategos ^{was} stoned to death by the Korsunians;⁵ however, it is not clear whether he was killed because of the prince's death or for some other reason.

Following this incident, the Rus' of Tmutarakan intervened, asking Priest Nikon to mediate between them and Svyatoslav and to secure Gleb's return. Gleb celebrated his return by annexing Korchev–Kerch and the surrounding areas—which essentially belonged to the Tmutarakan Principality—to his own borders.⁶

Gleb had been brought to Novgorod by his father in 1068, and his brother Roman had been appointed in his place. Thus, for a full 10 years, Tmutarakan enjoyed a peaceful existence, and the Jews had lost the game.

82. In Russia

The tripartite rule of the princes in Russia proceeded without encountering any obstacles until the first crisis. However, in September 1968, a 12,000-strong Polovtsian army arrived in Kyiv, forcing the prince's *druzhina* to retreat. Had Prince Izyaslav not refused to distribute weapons from the state arsenal to the people of Kyiv to fight against the Polovtsians, they would not have achieved such a fortuitous victory. However, the prince's refusal to distribute weapons led to unrest among the people. Faced with this situation, Izyaslav fled to Poland; however, he later returned with the help of King Boleslav II. During this time, Prince Svyatoslav had succeeded in restoring order in Russia by defeating the Polovtsians with his army of three thousand men on the banks of the Snov River (1 November 1968).

Izyaslav's return in 1069, with the support of the Poles, was met with fierce resistance by the princes; on the day the city surrendered unconditionally, 70 residents of Kyiv were killed, followed by arrests, executions and torture. The people of Kyiv, in turn, responded to these actions with secret assassinations,

5 PL. H. 22, pp. 111, 311.

6 Artamonov, *Xazar*, p. 440, n. 6.

attacks on Polish patrols; the abbot of the Pechora Monastery, Anthony, had fled to Chernigov one night and sought refuge with Svyatoslav.⁷ Across almost the entirety of Russian territory, murderers and soldiers had taken action against Christians. The people believed in prophecies that they would be killed and that a punitive campaign would be launched in response. The pro-Western faction was dissatisfied with the outcome. For Russian lands were under threat even in the absence of external enemies.

But now enemies had emerged. In 1071, the Polovtsians attacked the cities of Rostovets and Neyatin, situated to the south-west of Kyiv. However, following their defeat at Snov, they did not dare to attack the Chernihiv region. In contrast, the city of Polotsk, to which Izyaslav had sent his two sons in succession, had been lost. The first of these sons had died for unknown reasons (1069); the second – Svyatopolk – had been expelled by Vseslav (1071). The third son of the Grand Prince's attempt to defeat Vseslav had yielded only a meagre victory at Golotichesk. Faced with this situation, Izyaslav was forced to begin negotiations with the rebellious Prince of Polotsk; consequently, the other members of the dynasty in Tmutarakan were pacified and compelled to take certain measures to restore order.

In 1072 (1073 in the chronicle), Svyatoslav and Vsevolod entered Kiev with their armies. Izyaslav went to Poland with a large treasure, saying, 'I will raise an army with this.'⁸ Although the Poles seized a large portion of this treasure, the wealth that Izyaslav managed to transport to Germany was more than sufficient to convince

Henry IV, who was at the head of the Holy Roman Empire, where the German people were in the majority. Henry IV promised to assist Izyaslav, but as he was occupied with suppressing the rebellious Saxons, he contented himself with sending an envoy to Svyatoslav. However, when the latter showed the emperor's envoy an even greater treasure, the envoy returned and advised the emperor to cease supporting Izyaslav. Poor Izyaslav, having no choice, turned to the Pope

He was forced to knock on the door of Gregory VII, that is, to betray Orthodoxy. In addition to proclaiming, in a bull issued on 17 April 1075, that Izyaslav was the holder of the Golden Throne of Kyiv, the Pope also sent a letter to Boleslav II on 20 April regarding the confiscated property—

7 PL. H. *LL*, p. 82.

8 PL. H. *LL*, pp. 122, 322.

to Prince Dimitri (Izyaslav's baptismal name). Boleslav not only returned the treasury but also, in 1076, mobilised his army to facilitate Izyaslav's return to Russia.

In those days when the greatest prince of all Russia was 'wandering about in a state of disarray among the tribes'⁹, Svyatoslav in Kiev was also grappling with the opposition of Theodosius, the abbot of the Pechora Monastery. Theodosius was not a man of any particular faction. On the contrary, he acted not in the name of political programmes, but by heeding the voice of his conscience. He was both very wealthy and Russia's first ascetic; yet he was not a fanatic. If it fell on a feast day, he would eat meat on Wednesdays and Thursdays. Theodosius, who had previously been loyal to Prince Izyaslav, was fighting against 'Latinism', which equated Catholicism with the anti-Trinitarian heresy of Savellius (3rd century) and Arianism.¹⁰ His loyalty to the Prince had not caused Theodosius to deviate from his ideological line. However, the time for the political line he followed would not come until the 14th century.

The victory of the Principality of Svyatoslav, that is, the pro-Russian faction, had vindicated Russia's stance. A treaty had been signed with Poland; the Russian expeditionary force under the command of Oleg Svyatoslavich and Vladimir Vsevolodovich Monomakh had assisted the Poles in the war against the Czechs in 1076,¹¹ but to tell the truth, this assistance had been of no benefit. Unfortunately, Svyatoslav died on 27 December 1076 during a failed military campaign, and his successor, Vsevolod, chose to make a deal with Izyaslav, consenting to his ascension to the Grand Prince's throne and accepting the Principality of Chernigov for himself. By 1077, the pro-Russian faction had begun to oppose the pro-Greek and pro-Western factions. And just in time!

Before proceeding further, let us consider why Svyatoslav lost. For one thing, he had no allies left! Granted, the support the Greeks gave to Vsevolod and the Latins to Izyaslav was temporary, but no one had come to Svyatoslav's aid. The position he held had led to his faction being isolated, which in turn had caused his sons' defeat. Had Vladimir Monomakh not drawn them to his side, the Polovtsians could naturally have been Svyatoslav's allies. In 1076, Svyatoslav summoned the Polovtsians to Polotsk and the region—

⁹ Ibid., pp. 132, 335.

¹⁰ See: *The Introduction of Christianity in Russia*, pp. 210–211.

¹¹ Solovyov, *History*, Vol. I, Part II, p. 348.

He had asked them to leave, and so he was left all alone. In this situation, it was inevitable that he would lose the prestige and position he had attained.

However, the pro-Greek factions were also in a difficult position. Although the Byzantine Empire's power had not yet coalesced into a single party, it was unable to derive much benefit from the conflict between two active groups that were nonetheless highly influential. One of these groups consisted of the state officials who sided with the capital, whilst the other comprised the provincial governors and border guards. The members of the first group were wealthy and had hired Varangians to protect themselves. The members of the second group, however, were warriors; yet they too were compelled to fight against the Seljuks on one side and their own commanders on the other. It should be noted, however, that the warriors were more concerned with internal conflicts than with the defence of the borders. Neither group refused the assistance of their enemies, solely to outmanoeuvre their rivals. The funds collected by the frugal Vasilios II were spent on buying supporters and paying the wages of mercenaries; luxurious mansions and the lands painstakingly cultivated by the peasants were plundered during a host of uprisings, the number of which is beyond the scope of our discussion.

In short, between 1064 (the fall of the fortress of Ani, captured by the Seljuks) and 1071 (the loss of Bari, the last Byzantine stronghold in southern Italy, seized by the French Normans, and the defeat of Romanos Diogenes by the Seljuks at Manzikert), from the most powerful state in the Near East into a weak state subjected to invasion by foreign tribes and adherents of other faiths. When Alexios Komnenos, the military commander of the warrior faction, seized the capital, his troops plundered it as though it were a city conquered by force. They raped the women, plundered the temples and reduced them to rubble; they stripped the councils of everything they possessed. In such circumstances, how could one possibly ask for help from a country incapable of helping itself?! The great Rus' princes, including Vsevolod Yaroslavich, thought the same. Indeed, the reckoning would be a bloody one.

83. The Svyatoslavichs

After seizing power, Izyaslav and Vsevolod accused Svyatoslav's principality of illegitimacy. In other words, Svyatoslav's children were outcasts and deprived of all authority. In Novgorod, ha-

Gleb, the absolute ruler, had fled to Zavolochye after being deposed by Svyatopolk Izyaslavich, and was killed there. David, a thoroughly obscure figure, managed to save his life, and no further news was heard of him. However, Oleg Svyatoslavich, a friend and comrade-in-arms of Vladimir Monomakh and the godfather of his son, had fled to his brother Roman in Tmutarakan on 10 April 1078. Boris Vyacheslavich, Vsevolod's rival—who had attempted to incite the Chernigovians to revolt against the new order in 1077—and who was also an outcast prince, was living there as well. (Boris had resisted for a mere eight days during this uprising and had subsequently been forced to flee.) Thus, the leaders of the pro-Russian faction, hoping to regain the positions they had lost in Russia, had gathered in Tmutarakan. Fortune was on their side, for Chernigov was behind them.

Roman had made amends for his father's mistake by reaching an agreement with the Polovtsians, but it was too late. For Vsevolod and Izyaslav had mustered forces many times greater than those of Svyatoslavich. Moreover, the latter's position was not secure. For the Jewish community in Tmutarakan sided with the great princes, particularly with the pro-Western Izyaslav.

In August 1078, Oleg and Boris entered Russian territory with the expelled *druzhinas* and an auxiliary Polovtsian battalion; after defeating Prince Vsevolod, they occupied Chernigov and established a garrison there. Vsevolod rushed to Kiev to seek help from Izyaslav. Vladimir Monomakh's forces arrived from Smolensk on a rapid march. The fresh troops laid siege to Chernigov and pounded the walls with catapults, but were unsuccessful. Meanwhile, Boris and Oleg had received reinforcements from Tmutarakan. Izyaslav and Vsevolod lifted the siege and went out to meet Oleg and Boris. Thus, Chernigov was saved by the blows the young princes dealt to one another. In October 1078, the great princes and the outcast princes faced off at Nejatina Niva, near Chernigov. The fighting was extremely fierce. Young Boris Vyacheslavich, who, having no purpose in life, had sought a famous death, and Grand Prince Izyaslav, who had attained everything he desired in the world, both lost their lives. Izyaslav's death paved the way for Vsevolod to the throne of Kiev, whilst his son Vladimir Monomakh was left to exercise *de facto* control over Russia.

Vsevolod was an extremely astute politician and a highly educated man. He spoke five languages and had a keen understanding of world politics. He

had dealt with the Svyatoslavichs without spilling a single drop of blood. In 1079, when Roman Svyatoslavich marched on Chernigov with the Polovtsians and Tmutarakan forces, Vsevolod reached an agreement with the Polovtsians and resolved the matter amicably without resorting to war. Roman was killed by Polovtsian nomads on his return, but it appears that Vsevolod was not the instigator of this heinous act. Subsequent events indicate that the 'Kozars',¹² that is, the Jewish community in Tmutarakan, were responsible for Roman's death.

This is only natural. For the Jews wanted to be rid of the Svyatoslavichs more than anyone else. For this reason, they captured Oleg Svyatoslavich, who was in Tmutarakan, and sent him across the border to Constantinople; there, Oleg was placed under house arrest by Emperor Nikephoros III, who likely wished to appease Vsevolod, who had also seized Tmutarakan. Vsevolod sent not one of the ruling princes of Tmutarakan, but an ordinary deputy named Ratibor. Thus, as the heir apparent, Prince Svyatopolk Izyaslavich, remained merely a governor of the Grand Prince in Novgorod, the pro-Greek faction had achieved the victory it sought.

It is unlikely that the Jewish community in Tmutarakan was pleased with the Greek influence supporting the Russian voivode Ratibor, but they remained patient. For time was working against them. The struggle initiated by the bureaucrats in Constantinople against the strategos had become a matter of greater importance than the defence of the borders. Indeed, in 1078, Nicaea surrendered to the Seljuks without a fight, and in 1079 the Seljuks also captured Chrysopolis (Üsküdar) on the shores of the Bosphorus. During the same years, the Pechenegs, who had invaded the Balkans, ravaged Thrace, whilst Byzantine rule in Italy had fallen into the hands of the French Normans.

It was during such a difficult period that an incident occurred which seriously affected relations between Kiev, Constantinople and even Tmutarakan. On the eve of 1079 and 1080, the Russian Varangians suddenly burst through the imperial borders, laid siege to the city walls and shot arrows at the emperor himself. They were all drunk. Byzantine soldiers captured them and confined them to a small fortress. When the Varangians came to their senses, they begged for forgiveness and were pardoned. However, their leaders were sent to garrisons in various fortresses, that is, they were exiled

12 Solov'yev S. M. *History of Russia*, Vol. 1, Part II, p. 353.

.¹³ Around the same time, Oleg Svyatoslavich had also been sent from the capital to the island of Rhodes.

This absurd historical event had, it seems, affected Russian-Greek relations. The Russians were no longer eager to serve in Constantinople; the Greeks, for their part, were preferring the Anglo-Saxons—who had largely abandoned their homeland and been captured by the French Normans—in their place.¹⁴ Vsevolod's position in the Black Sea region did not look particularly secure, and the Jews would not hesitate to take advantage of this opportunity.

It should be noted that in the 11th century, the most formidable warriors in Eastern Europe were the princely *drujinas*, composed of professional soldiers. Consequently, even the outcast princes would hire these same *drujinas* when they had the funds to pay for the necessary troops to carry out their operations. Indeed, in 1081, two outcast princes seized this opportunity, fleeing from Russia to Tmutarakan, driving out Ratibor and ascending to the princely throne. One of them was Volodar Rostislavich, the son of the poisoned prince (see below), and the other was David Igorevich. It appears that these two were prepared to collaborate even with the Devil himself in order to secure a place for themselves under the heavens.

As Vsevolod was occupied at the time with fighting the Polovtsians, he had taken no measures against these two princes. Moreover, it was difficult to carry out operations in the south without the support of the Greeks. Indeed, Emperor Alexios Komnenos himself was in need of assistance against the Pechenegs and Seljuks, and had found this in the Polovtsian khans Tugorkan and Bonyak; with their aid, he had saved Byzantium. However, as long as the Polovtsians continued their border wars with Russia, the friendship between Alexios and Vsevolod would remain merely superficial. But in the meantime, the time had come for the captive Prince Oleg Svyatoslavich.

84. The Adventures of Oleg Svyatoslavich

After spending four years under house arrest and in exile in Constantinople and on the island of Rhodes, Prince Oleg witnessed a coup d'état—

¹³ Vasilevskiy V. G. *The Varangian-Russian and Varangian-English Druzhina in Constantinople*//Trudy, Vol. 2, pp. 353–354.

¹⁴ The Normans living in northern France gradually became French-Norman, a process that was characteristic of the early stages of their rise.

his master granted him his freedom. In March 1081, Emperor Nikephoros III Botaneiates had been deposed. Alexios Komnenos had implemented numerous reforms, but in 1082 he faced opposition from the 'Manichaeans', that is, the old allies of the Khazar Jews: the Bulgarian Bogomils and Paulicians. In this situation, the emperor sent Oleg, along with his wife, to Tmutarakan in 1083. As soon as Oleg returned, he set about taking revenge on those who had participated in his brother's murder and had taken a hostile stance against him personally. The reasons for his desire for revenge were well known, but how would Oleg achieve this?

Now let us imagine the following scene: Prince Oleg, accompanied by his wife, arrives on the shores of a city ruled by his rivals, David Igorevich and Volodar Rostislavich, aboard a Byzantine ship. In the same city, the most influential segment of the population – the 'Khazars' – had good reason to hate the returning exiles. The man returning from exile had neither money nor an army. Yet this man, all on his own, suddenly defeats his enemies and takes both *knàzes* prisoner! How could he have pulled off such a coup d'état?

It follows, then, that a powerful group—whom M. I. Artamonoff referred to as the 'natives'—was supporting Oleg. The Circassians, Ossetians and Polovtsians backed Oleg, made him their commander, and put an end to the schemes of the schemers and traitors. Oleg was a quantum of energy that released the 'boiling steam'. We have no basis for claiming that this explosion was a pre-planned historical event. Intense passion can weaken if the energy of those possessing it is redirected elsewhere. In other words, if the passionate peoples of the Caucasus had channelled their energy in a different direction, that energy might have weakened. For instance, had the Polovtsians gone to war with the Bulgars, or had the Circassians begun fighting the Ossetians, that energy would have been expended. But something else happened, and the spark struck the indigenous Turkic-Yafes people caught between the two super-ethnic groups, and the migrant people arriving from outside, who were already reduced to ashes. Neither former allies nor neighbours took pity on this people. Thus, the history of Jewish Khazaria came to an end.

Well, could it have been any different? It could have been, of course, but that is a very remote possibility. As a rule, interactions at the super-ethnic level lead to annihilation. As an exception, only short-lived passive-aggressive outbursts may occur, but even in such cases, the old ethnic groups disappear, dissolving into the fabric of the new ones. In 11th-century Eastern Europe, parallel to the decline in passive-aggressive tension

Consequently, processes of ethno-cultural crystallisation took place. Thus, the chance of a creative fusion between the ethnic groups was slim, but the likelihood of one of them being destroyed was high. This provided further support for the theory that ethnic history is a reality. Unfortunately, the laziness of chroniclers who disliked Prince Oleg Svyatoslavich has deprived subsequent generations of the fascinating and dramatic details of these extraordinary events.

After becoming the independent ruler of Tmutarakan, Oleg once again demonstrated the magnanimity he had never betrayed throughout his life, which had been spent under difficult conditions, and allowed his enemies, David Igorevich and Volodar Rostislavich, to go to Russia. David continued to engage in banditry there as well. In the city of Olesye, situated at the Dnieper estuary—a key trading hub—he plundered the goods of merchants trading with the Greeks. Naturally, this behaviour led to him falling out of favour with Grand Prince Vsevolod Yaroslavich, and he was permitted to rule only over the tiny town of Dorogobuzh.

Vsevolod lacked an ally with whom to fight Oleg. Oleg, however, a former ally of Alexios Komnenos, had established his authority in many Russian regions that had once belonged to his father but had subsequently been lost by his uncle. Although Vsevolod ruled over all Russian lands, Tmutarakan—protected by the Polovtsian nomads—lay outside his sphere of influence. This was because the peace treaty concluded with the Polovtsians had remained unbroken for 15 years.

It is unlikely that Emperor Alexios's support for Oleg failed to anger Grand Prince Vsevolod. Indeed, Vsevolod demonstrated his reaction by turning towards the West; he gave his daughter Yevpraksiya in marriage to the border lord Henrich. In 1083, the young princess arrived in Germany "accompanied by a magnificent embassy, a camel caravan laden with luxurious garments, precious stones and rare treasures."¹⁵

Yevpraksiya was educated in a convent until 1086. When she reached marriageable age, she married a provincial governor, but was widowed shortly afterwards and returned to the convent. Emperor Henry IV fell in love with the young widow in 1088 and married her. Now, before us stands not a young widowed princess, but Empress Adelheid. Yet this marriage would bring her no happiness. For Henry IV belonged to the Satanist sect of the Nicolaists. As with all Satanists, in this sect too, the cl-

15 Pašuto, *Vnešnyaya*, pp. 125–128.

respect for its rites and secrets is fundamental. The Emperor takes his wife to these secret rites, where rituals insulting the Church are performed on her naked body.

Yevpraksiya was a Russian woman. Unable to tolerate her boorish German husband, she fled from him and sought refuge with his enemy, Countess Matilda, and Pope Urban II. In 1094, she attended the Council of Constance. A year later, at the Council of Piacenza, she revealed her husband's secret and sought forgiveness for the sin she had committed unwittingly. She then returned to Russia via Hungary, where she breathed her last on 9 July 1109.

The story of a Christian princess marrying a Satanist Catholic—who, on the face of it, was an enemy of Christianity and her own people—was a misguided consequence of Vsevolod's policy and, naturally, had driven many Russian citizens to join the nationalist party led by Oleg. Archbishop John II Prodromos had categorically forbidden the establishment of relations with Rome. The communal spirit, shaped by ethnic identity, appeared to be stronger than political calculations and had torn it apart.

Yet this was not the case in Germany. An emperor revealed to be a Satanist should, as a matter of course, have been abandoned by all his Christian subjects, but this did not happen. Henry IV continued to fight his political enemies with the support of his own political allies, but the sense of conscience—which was of considerable importance to the Russians—held no significance whatsoever for those involved in these events.

As it turned out, Princess Yevpraksiya's romantic tragedy could not have had serious consequences, either for international relations or for the ethnogenesis of the Eastern Slavs. How many similar events have there been in history! Had the factors of time and place not come into play, this too would have been just another forgotten episode.

It is likely that, having become a nun, the ill-fated princess saw little point in dwelling on her troubled past; yet the affair caused a major scandal in the West, and at a time when German-Russian trade relations were flourishing, it was impossible for the news not to reach as far as Kyiv, where the lamps in the stone synagogues—built in their own neighbourhoods with their own funds by German Jewish merchants—burned brightly. The Jews, of course, were influential in the public opinion of Kiev. In the West, the Jews held a share in the empire, the feudal lords

. Since the Jews, thanks to the protection of the Grand Prince, were able to compete successfully with Russian merchants and craftsmen, it was only natural that the latter should harbour sympathy for the feudal lords, who had not yet turned their attention to the East in the 11th and 12th centuries. This is how the parties of Old Russia, which would later be known as the Ghibellines or Guelphs, became drawn into the great European struggle. In the 13th century, the princes of Volhynia sided with the Ghibellines, whilst the princes of Seversk aligned themselves with the Guelphs. However, at the root of this division—which led to tragic events in Russia—lies, as far as can be seen, the conflict caused by Yevpraksiya's unhappy marriage, even though she herself cannot be held responsible for the subsequent disasters.

Be that as it may, we can assume that pro-Greek sentiments and threats directed against the Grand Princes were on the rise. Although these princes wielded considerable power, the support of the wider populace was fleeting.

Grand Prince Vsevolod ruled Russia for 15 years (1078–1093). When his nephews knocked on the gates of Kiev, demanding that towns be granted to them, he was ill and quite advanced in years. According to the system of succession to the throne, the golden throne of Kiev had passed to his incompetent but cunning nephew, Svyatopolk Izyaslavich. Vsevolod's son, Vladimir Monomakh, was residing in Chernigov, fearing the wrath of his cousin. The people of Kiev had welcomed the new prince with love and joy, but events were to unfold in an unexpected manner.

85. : An Echo of a Troubled Past

Prince Vsevolod Yaroslavich's undisputed greatest achievement was securing a firm peace on the steppe frontier. Although the Polovtsians possessed considerable strength, they could find no pretext to wage war against Russia. The incidents that occurred prior to the peace were random and isolated. But the Polovtsians and the Russians shared a single, common enemy: the Torks and the Pechenegs. The war with the Pechenegs had tied the Polovtsians' hands until the Battle of Leburn in 1091; the Torks, meanwhile, had come under the rule of the Prince of Kyiv during this period.

This peace had virtually eradicated the slave trade, the incurable wound of past centuries. Slaves were now taken only as prisoners of war

The victorious side would sell the prisoners of war they had captured to merchants, who in turn would sell these prisoners to local officials who ensured the safety of the caravans in exchange for a share of the profits. These merchants could neither be Russian nor Polovtsian.

The Polovtsians were allies of the Byzantines, who did not purchase Christian slaves; but the Seljuks, who were related to the Pechenegs, were enemies of the Polovtsians. Consequently, the southern route was closed to the slave trade. The Russians had not repaired their relations with the Catholic kings following the schism of the churches. For this reason, those wishing to sell slaves were forced to turn to intermediaries, namely the Jewish *Rahdânîs*.¹⁶ Later, however, the destination of the slave buyers changed. The Arabs of Al-Andalus could not afford such a luxury after the collapse of the Umayyads in 1031 and the fragmentation of the caliphate into smaller states. However, after the Christians captured Tuleytula (Toledo) in 1085, when the Emir of Seville, Mûtemid, called upon the Tavariks for assistance, the need for slaves also disappeared. Meanwhile, the Fatimid Caliph of Egypt, Mustansir (1036–1094), was prepared to purchase as many ‘Turkish’ slaves as could be brought to him, and he had the funds to do so. Consequently, the demand for slaves had increased in the 11th century, but this would not last long.

The Fatimids of 11th-century Egypt and the Umayyads of 10th-century Al-Andalus shared the same origins. The Arabs had conquered a prosperous land inhabited by people of different religions and sects, utilising the Berbers both there and in Egypt. In Spain, the subjects of the Sunni Muslims were Christians; in Egypt, however, the subjects of the Ismailis were Sunni Muslims. Both states were deprived of the support of their respective metropolises (Al-Andalus had broken away from the Caliphate in 756; Ifriqiya had rebelled against the Fatimids in 1041) and were therefore forced to hire soldiers or purchase slaves. The latter was the more practical option. In Spain, warriors bought from the market were called ‘Sakalibe’, whilst in Egypt they were known as ‘Mamluks’. Acquiring warrior slaves of the same ethnic origin was always risky. They could easily seize power, as the Turks had done in Baghdad in the 10th century. For this reason, warriors from Africa and Eastern Europe were highly prized. The Caliphs of Al-Andalus hired Berbers, whilst the Caliphs of Egypt purchased Sudanese Negroes. During the reign of Mustansir, who was himself the son of a black woman, there were 50,000 black-skinned people in Cairo

16 Bosworth, *Musulmanskiye*, pp. 80–81.

There were slave warriors. Consequently, in 1062, 'Turkish' slaves who 'fought against the blacks and routed them' also had to be purchased, and indeed were purchased.¹⁷ As long as Cairo's relations with Baghdad remained hostile, the number of Mamluks was inevitably increasing. Money collected from the people was being spent for this purpose, and it was unclear where this would lead.

In such circumstances, thanks to the 'law of property', the Fatimids—who had been religious leaders—had become ordinary sultans who drew their livelihood from the state treasury. They sincerely believed that their personal safety and luxuries would be provided by slaves and middlemen. At that time, some Christian kings were prepared to sell their own subjects for a good price. Jewish merchants, who roamed freely throughout the Mediterranean region because they did not take part in wars, were exactly the men they were looking for.

It goes without saying that those who wished to return to the 'golden age' of the slave trade—that is, the 9th and 10th centuries—were those who were certain they themselves would not be sold. These were, for the most part, people living in well-fortified trading cities. In the 11th century, there were two such cities in Eastern Europe: Kiev and Chersonesos (Korsun). The inhabitants of other cities could be purchased with the currency in circulation at the time, and in practice, this could not be prevented. Consequently, Jewish colonies acting as intermediaries in the slave trade had emerged here and there, though their situations varied considerably.

In Chersonesos, there lived Eastern Jews who had escaped the destruction suffered by the Khazar Khaganate. In Christian Byzantium, they had been granted limited trading rights, and in many instances they were forbidden to sell Christians into slavery. However, during periods of turmoil, coups and uprisings, Chersonesos would temporarily show its true colours. A Jew who had agreed to be baptised solely for the sake of his career had become the city's archbishop.¹⁸ This Jewish archbishop, without straining his relations with the people, permitted his fellow tribesmen to engage in the trade of Russian prisoners of war, which they could sell to the Polovtsians at a low price. However, war was a prerequisite for the procurement of these prisoners.

¹⁷ Müller, *History of Islam*, II/342–343.

¹⁸ See: *The Kiev-Pechersk Paterikon* / Edited by D. I. Abramovich. Kiev, 1931, pp. 106–107.

The war broke out in May 1093; the slave market at Korsun was filled with Russian prisoners, their hands bound, their calves bare, hungry and destitute. The Jews were buying them up at rock-bottom prices to sell on to others, and according to historical sources, they treated them far worse than the Polovtsians did. Between you and me, the Jews used to buy Greek and Christian slaves to kill them in the old days; sometimes they would let prisoners die of hunger and thirst here and there. Indeed, a fanatical Jew had crucified Yevstratiy Postnik, the monk of the Kiev-Pechora Monastery, which had been captured by the Polovtsians in 1096. But the repercussions of this incident reached as far as Constantinople. Alexios Komnenos was a resolute man. He immediately ordered that the perpetrators of this crime be found. It eventually emerged that the Archbishop of Chersonesos and the entire Jewish community were involved in the affair. Basil Alexios ordered that those responsible for the archbishop's "brutal murder" be punished, and that the entire Crimean Jewish community be punished as a whole. The murderer of Priest Yevstratiy was also hanged from a tree, in a manner similar to that of Judea.

Of course, not all the Jews in Crimea were punished. On the contrary, only those involved in the slave trade got what they deserved. The rest were left in peace after declaring their intention to convert to Christianity. It is, of course, doubtful whether they were sincere in this decision, but the slave trade in Chersonesus had come to an end, and it was no coincidence that the Russo-Polovtsian War took on a different character from 1097 onwards. The meaning and purpose of the war were now entirely different. To properly trace the course of the Rus-Polovtsian wars during this period, it is necessary to look back a little and review certain events in Old Rus history.

86. Oleg Svyatoslavich's Return to the ' '

The situation in the vast and prosperous city of Kyiv was quite tense. The reason for this was the intense process of ethnogenesis, that is, the shift in behavioural patterns across generations. According to the chronicler, the elderly and ailing Prince Vsevolod 'favoured the clever young men... and they, in turn, ^{had begun} to encourage the elderly prince to look down upon his old družinas'²⁰. Here, during the peaceful phases of ethnogenesis,

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 107.

What we have here is a common ‘fathers and sons’ conflict, which is, however, quite useful during periods of upheaval. In such cases, the ‘elder’ is cast aside not because he is ‘bad’, but on the contrary because the younger generation wishes to prove itself and, to that end, does not want anyone’s help. This behaviour may sometimes be beneficial for all ethno-systems, but at other times the opposite is true. However, our contemporaries evaluate events not through the diagnoses they apply to incidents from the distant past, but according to their personal sympathies and arbitrary desires. Yet here, the young people, taking advantage of the old prince’s helplessness, ‘had begun to plunder and sell people...’²¹ In other words, they had defiled an era filled with the heroic deeds their ancestors had performed in the name of freedom, and had sold out the peaceful Slavic people of the Podneprov.

Prince Svyatopolk Izyaslavich (baptised name: Mikhail Dmitrievich) relied on this youth and did not separate his own interests from theirs. As soon as he ascended the throne, he arrested the Polovtsian envoys who had come to confirm the terms of peace. He conducted the war he had personally initiated in a futile manner, guided by the utterly absurd and unimaginable views of his young advisers, thereby sidelining capable boyars. He even quarrelled with the Pechora Monastery, which traditionally followed an anti-Byzantine line, and seized the salt they had obtained from the Kievan Rus’. The Grand Prince not only sent this salt to be sold at a high price in the market, but also treated the monks as though they were invaders and unclean.

The Grand Prince’s such selfish, unprincipled behaviour and the foolish and unsuccessful war he waged against the Polovtsians in 1093–1094 would, of course, lead to the spread of discontent in Russia and lay the groundwork for Oleg Svyatoslavich to conclude that his time had come. The ancient enmity between the Chernigovians and the Kievians, Svyatopolk II’s policies, and the hopes tied to Russian nationalism had driven him to commit errors whose consequences could not be undone.

Oleg had permanently abandoned Tmutarakan in 1094. He had taken his Rus’, local and Polovtsian supporters with him, and had personally handed over his principality to Alexios Komnenos, who had annexed Tmutarakan to the Byzantine Empire.

20 *РМЛ. Н. 2*, p. 343.

21 *Ibid.*

Since Oleg had no hidden enemies behind him, the campaign he organised was successful. Monomakh, besieged in the fortress of Chernigov, managed to hold out for eight days. However, apart from Oleg's druzhinas and the Polovtsians, the Chernigovians themselves were also against him. The fact that only 100 people in total, including women and children, remained with Monomakh also demonstrates this. Oleg, showing magnanimity, released everyone who had fallen into a trap or been imprisoned—including his former friends and those who had confirmed his right to rule as prince in Chernigov.

Chernigov was considered the second city of the 'Rurikid Empire'. According to the system of succession to the throne, the Prince of Chernigov had the right to ascend to the Golden Throne of Kyiv in the event of the elder brother's death. Oleg, "although he was not the Grand Prince himself,... was the next in line after Vsevolod's elder brother Svyatoslav,"²² but his legal position was weak. For before him stood his elder brother David, who was under the protection of Grand Prince Svyatopolk II in Smolensk and had previously been one of his aides. David and, subsequently, his sons were the constant enemies of Oleg and his descendants. But this situation had paved the way to power for Vladimir Vsevolodovich Monomakh, the enemy of the Polovtsians, the Western-oriented factions, and the Byzantine-aligned commander. The army assembled by Svyatopolk and Vladimir Monomakh far outnumbered the forces under Oleg's command; yet the Steppe of the Kipchaks, having neutralised the threat of a counter-attack from Kiev, stood behind him. For this reason, Svyatopolk and Vladimir engaged in battle against the Polovtsians—whom they had no need to subjugate—and even the boyars, with the aim of eliminating Oleg.

87. Oleg Svyatoslavich's ' ' Analogy

History, particularly when written by poets, can often be unfair. The author of the 'Tale of Igor's Campaign' has completely distorted the facts by claiming that Prince Oleg Gorislavich formed an alliance with the Polovtsians to reclaim his homeland, Chernigov.

Let us set that aside for now, but what are we to make of Vladimir Monomakh's account that he formed an alliance with the Polovtsians and, with their help, captured Minsk, leaving not a stone upon another? Moreover,

²² PSRL. T. 2X, p. 343.

. Apparently, Monomakh concluded ‘nineteen peace treaties’ with the Polovtsians and used their mercenaries against Oleg. It doesn’t end there. Since Oleg had ‘sharpened his sword’, the other princes saw no harm in seeking aid from the Polovtsians on the grounds that it would not constitute a ‘murder’, and so on. We shall take a look at these ‘and so on’s’ and attempt to uncover nothing but the facts.

In the early 90s of the 11th century, a poor man dressed in odd clothes arrived in Constantinople from the east. He claimed to be Leon, the son of Emperor Romanos Diogenes, who had been exiled to Chersonesos by Alexios Komnenos after having his eyes gouged out, and who had died there. Pseudo-Leon managed to escape, married Maria, the daughter of Vladimir Monomakh, and persuaded the Polovtsian chieftains Itlar and Kitan to launch a campaign against Byzantium in order to reclaim his throne. However, in 1095, the same Leon was captured by government forces near Adrianople, had his eyes gouged out, and met his end in prison; the Itlar and Kitan, meanwhile, had sought refuge with Vladimir, the father-in-law of their ally. Believing that guests would not be harmed, the Itlar entered Pereyaslavl with their finest soldiers and spent the night in the hay barn in the courtyard of Boyar Ratibor, who had previously served as regent in Tmutarakan. (Kitan, meanwhile, had been left as a hostage outside the city, alongside Prince Vladimir’s son, as a guarantee of security and peace).²³ Let us recall that the Polovtsians had arrived from Siberia only a short time before and were a people who knew neither treachery nor the killing of guests.

As it happened, around that time, a boyar named Slavyat had come from Kiev to Vladimir on some business. With the help of the *druzhina* loyal to Ratibor—a man who had never been at odds with the Polovtsians in his life—he treacherously murdered both Polovtsian khans and their companions. Vladimir had not wished to do this, but had yielded to the pressure of Grand Prince Svyatopolk’s envoy and Ratibor’s *druzhina*.

The reason for this murder becomes clear from subsequent events. Svyatopolk and Vladimir had demanded that Oleg hand over his son, who was staying as a guest in Chernigov and had joined them on a hunting expedition without harbouring any suspicion regarding the Polovtsians, so that he might be killed. During the hunt, they had captured ‘cattle, horses, camels’ as well as ‘many people’ who had not anticipated that the peace might be suddenly broken.

23 PVL. H. 2, p. 148.

The aim of this move is clear. Svyatopolk and Vladimir wished to implicate Oleg in this crime, thereby driving a wedge between him and the Polovtsians. For Oleg had, with the Polovtsians' help, rescued Chernigov and secured for himself a homeland and a place under the heavens. Oleg did not fall for the provocation and rejected the offer. In response to this situation, in 1096, they summoned Oleg to appear before a court in the presence of the archbishop, the clergy and the citizens. When Oleg refused to go to court, war broke out. During this war, some of the Polovtsians sided with Oleg, whilst others sided with Vladimir Monomakh. Ultimately, Oleg lost Chernigov, whilst Bonyak-khan, having ravaged the area around Kiev, also razed the Pechora Monastery to the ground in 1097.

What a senseless disaster! What was the point? Who stood to gain from waging war against the Polovtsians, who sought peace? The power of the Russian princes—with their impregnable fortresses, abundant steel weapons, well-trained *druzhinas*, or even large numbers of untrained volunteers—left no room for doubt as to the outcome of this war. But the war was unnecessary for the Russians. The Polovtsians responded with raids to the provocation and treacherous actions initiated by Prince Svyatopolk II of Kiev. During these attacks, many *smerds* and *grids** lost their lives. Oleg was opposed to this policy... and he would pay the price with his life. The Principality of Chernigov, which he had captured with great difficulty, had been granted to his elder brother David, who had served the Grand Prince loyally but had been removed from power. Faced with this situation, Oleg went to Murom and, with support from Rostov and Suzdal, attempted to seize Novgorod. But the forces were not evenly matched.

After battling for two years against the numerically superior forces of the Grand Prince and his supporters, Oleg, following his defeat at the Kolokša River, attended the assembly of princes at Lyubech and sought to secure a decision granting Novgorod-Severskiy to him.

However, quite unexpectedly, they hanged him. The Grand Prince had consented to the participation of Vasilko, Prince of Terebovl, in this despicable act of gouging out his eyes. Even Vladimir Monomakh came there “and wept at the sight of the horror.” However, the Russian public held the Grand Prince responsible for this incident. Nevertheless, Oleg did not die in vain, as the princes gathered at Uvetiči in 1100 secured a “peace treaty”.

* *Smerd*: A peasant of the middle class; *Grid*: A person of higher rank than a *druzhina*. A title given to the prince's close associates (trans.).

Russia's most pressing issue was its relations with the Polovtsians. The merchant circles of Kyiv—slave traders—were fiercely pro-war, as this was their sole source of income. However, despite Vladimir Monomakh's personal involvement in this war, which he had himself instigated, victory was not achieved.

At the assembly of princes held at Dolobok in 1103, Vladimir Monomakh put forward his own plan, which ran counter to that of Svyatopolk's *druzhina*, who wished to continue the protracted war, which had yielded many advantages. Monomakh sought to organise a final assault to secure victory, and he achieved his aim. A full-scale assault was carried out, and victory was secured!²⁴

The history of this war provides an opportunity to correct the preconceived notion that the Polovtsians were nomads, like the Eastern Mongols and the Kazakh *Adai* tribe in the Aral region. For it is not sensible to roam as nomads in the Dnieper region, where the snow depth exceeds 40 cm in winter, for an entire year. For in winter the herds require fodder; in spring, however, lush vegetation awaits them after the harsh winter days.

Here, then, is the explanation of why Monomakh attacked the Polovtsian winter camps on the eve of spring and how he defeated them by depriving them of their manoeuvring ability. Even before the battle began, it was clear that victory would be assured for the Russians. Unable to hold their nerve in the face of the attacks, the Polovtsians fled, whilst the Russian cavalry cut down the fleeing men without suffering a single casualty. After the men, it was the turn of the Polovtsian women, children, herds, and the winter camps where the Tork and Pechenegs had taken refuge to be plundered.

However, the war was not to end there. Monomakh had *Bel-düz-han*, who had been taken prisoner, executed; yet this served only to heighten tensions further; the Polovtsians had refused to surrender. This time, *Bonyak-han* had taken the lead in resisting the Russian attacks. It was he who had saved Byzantium in 1091, defeated the Magyar king *Koloman* on the banks of the *San River* in 1097, and razed the *Kiev Pechora Monastery* to the ground after the death of the *Itlar*; and now he had not laid down his arms.

Bonyak-han responded to Vladimir's campaign with attacks on *Pereyaslavl* in 1105 and 1107. The second attack, led by eight *knäz*-

24 The Battle of *Suten* on 4 April 1103 (PVL. H. 2, pp. 183–185).

had been halted. However, this victory did not bring the desired peace, and Vladimir launched a second campaign in 1110; yet, however hard he searched, he could not find the Polovtsians. Naturally, many villages in the Principality of Pereyasavl had been plundered. The following year, Svyatopolk, Vladimir and David set out again for the south-east in the spring. The battle that took place on 27 March 1111 near the Salnitsa River (now the Izum) resulted in a decisive victory for the Russian army.

Finally, in 1116, a final campaign was launched in the vicinity of the Don (i.e. Donets) River. Three Alan fortresses and a beautiful princess, whom Yaroslav Vladimirovich had married, were captured; but the Russian attack had yielded no result.

In the same year, the Tork and Pecheneg tribes, who were allied with the Russians, were defeated by the Polovtsians during a two-day battle on the banks of the Don River and fled to Russia. In 1117, the Russian inhabitants of Bela Veja [Akhisar] on the left bank of the Don followed in their footsteps.²⁵ However, events that subsequently unfolded on Russian soil itself would hinder the conquest of the Great Steppe; thus, this region would cease to be a 'Russian lake' and become 'unknown lands', only to be reclaimed in the 18th century.

Between you and me, it could not have been otherwise. In Russia, the Monomakh dynasty's power and popularity were both limited. The nomadic Polovtsians had spread from the Dniester to the Irtysh; not to mention the lands beyond the Ural, even the regions on the other side of the Don had slipped from the Kyiv army's sphere of influence. Consequently, following a series of resolute yet, alas, futile victories, Oleg Svyatoslavich's programme became the cornerstone of Russia's steppe policy. Oleg regarded expeditions into the heart of the steppe as pointless; instead, he chose to resolve the matter through peaceful negotiations and marital alliances. Nevertheless, whilst Oleg refused to participate in campaigns, he always combined his forces with those of other princes whenever the security of the borders was at stake.²⁶ This policy was also adopted by his successors, the Severks princes, and ensured their victories.

As can be seen, Oleg committed no errors during his life of approximately sixty years. On the contrary, if there is anyone in Russia who is not reviled or cursed

²⁵ Artamonov, *Khazars*, 450–452.

²⁶ Golubovskiy P. V. *The Pechenegs and the Torki*, pp. 110, 111.

, it was undoubtedly the last Rus khan, Oleg. The depictions of him in the ‘Tale of Igor’s Campaign’ are unfounded and unjust. Following Oleg’s death, Rus-Kipchak relations entered a new phase.²⁷ The great war was now over, and the Polovtsians had begun to intervene in the internal conflicts among the Rus princes. Indeed, even a century later, the Rus and the Polovtsians would join forces to fight together against the Crusaders, the Seljuks and the Mongols.

During the senseless wars initiated by Svyatopolk and his advisors, both the Russians and the Polovtsians suffered equally. If one considers that Svyatopolk was not personally an enemy of the Polovtsians—and was even married to a Polovtsian princess—it becomes clear that the true culprits behind these wars were the ‘young advisers’ surrounding the Grand Prince, who exploited his weaknesses and helplessness. However, Oleg was blamed in their stead; in the ‘Chronicle of Nestor’, he is portrayed as the man who muddied the waters, and didactic fables were told in place of the true events. So, who were these ‘advisers’?

88. Hazin Conclusion

Appearances can be deceiving. Although historical events may be rooted in the actions of certain individuals, these individuals—who shape major historical events—may not be accurately portrayed. The actions of individuals gain meaning to the extent that they are supported by the consortia that shape social patterns. By the end of the 11th century, there were three such consortia in Kiev: the elder boyars, the masses, and the young entourage of Svyatopolk II. Those in the first group opposed the policy pursued by the Grand Prince.²⁸ Those in the second group made it abundantly clear that they did not like the prince. As for the third group, although they possessed no power of their own, they managed to survive thanks to the prince’s generous patronage. However, there was another group in Kiev. This group was a real power that provided Svyatopolk with money to pay the *druzhinas*’ wages and to buy off other princes. Of course, these were the inhabitants of the Jewish colony. But they were not the enterprising and courageous *Rahdanians*, but rather cunning moneylenders who had come from Germany via Poland.²⁹

27 Pletneva S. A. *Polovetskaya zemlya*//*Drevnerusskie knazstva X-XIII vv.*, p. 275.

28 PL. H. *Цз*, pp. 99-101.

29 T[menev A. I. *Jews in Antiquity and the Middle Ages*.

These Jews, taking advantage of the protection of pro-Western princes, became so powerful in Kiev that they eventually set out to take revenge on Svyatoslavich's son Oleg and his Kipchak allies.

After Oleg had meddled in the affairs of Novgorod-Seversk and the Polovtsians had slaughtered the last Jews in Russia, the Christian Church—namely the Kiev Metropolis, which was linked to the Patriarchate of Constantinople—had survived. The rift between Svyatopolk and the metropolitan stemmed from a very cunning manoeuvre. The prince had attempted to preserve the Pechora Monastery as the Russian national church and had entrusted its reconstruction to the historical council active between 1100 and 1113.³⁰

It would appear that the Judeo-Khazar chimera, found dead on the banks of the Dnieper, had been revived, with fresh blood brought from the banks of the Rhine and the Rhône injected into its system. Western Jews had not fallen into the same errors as the Iranian and Byzantine Jews. For they had not sought to seize power, but had merely supported the legitimate heir in his undertakings. The old state officials retained their posts, but had lost the prince's favour and their influence in state affairs. Trade and craftsmanship had gradually come under Jewish control. For whilst Russian merchants and craftsmen acted on their own, the Jewish community provided assistance to each of its members. Moreover, the savage massacres perpetrated by the Crusaders—which the feudal lords governing the cities around the Rhine could not restrain—were causing a wave of Jewish migration to flow from Germany towards Russia. In Kiev, meanwhile, Svyatopolk II maintained his grip on power with the assistance of the 'young' boyars, who were gaining political support in proportion to his growing strength. At the head of the army stood Major Putyat Vyshatich, brother of the famous Yan Vyshatich. In 1071, Yan Vyshach had displayed extraordinary heroism and valour in suppressing the Volkhov uprising in the lands of Rostov-Suzdal. During the reign of Vsevolod I, he had been a major, that is, an army commander; however, when Prince German began to consort with the Germans, their relationship soured. Svyatopolk II, however, removed him from state affairs; in contrast, he brought his brother Putyat—who, despite lacking any particular talents, had achieved a brilliant career—into his inner circle. Meanwhile, during the military campaign of 1106, the comrade-in-arms who was by his side—and who is mentioned both in chronicles and epics—was Kazarin,

30 *PL. H. 22*, p. 102.

Let us note that he was a voivode named ^{Hazarin}³¹. The Jewish community has always remained outside the scope of many historians' attention during periods when it lost its influence over social activities.

The political line during Svyatopolk's reign was geared towards the personal selection of officials. The prince sought to rid himself of the 'passioners'—men of free will, capable and energetic. To this end, he had even permitted people to have their eyes gouged out. For instance, he displayed the same cruelty even after betraying Vasiliy Rostislavič and removing Vladimir Monomakh and Yan Višatič from power. The administrative mechanism had become extremely simple: Jewish moneylenders shared the money they collected from the people of Kyiv with the prince; he, in turn, used this money to raise an army and ensured that future revenues could be collected. Those dissatisfied with this state of affairs were leaderless and posed no threat to the regime. In such circumstances, what could the isolated regional princes, the unarmed smerds under surveillance, and the common people do? Although the new order was not accepted by the people, it appeared to be quite secure.

Passion, unfortunately, also leads to much bloodshed at the moment of its extinction. Those who escape the oppression of the passionate, by shattering the robust system they have established, pave the way for the instincts that had been suppressed until then. This was the case in ancient Rome, and later in Constantinople and Baghdad. It was also the case in Kiev, which at that time was Europe's third-richest and most populous city. Only Constantinople and Cordoba were more magnificent than Kiev, but both had already begun to decline.

It was not external enemies that threatened Kyiv, but rather nature itself, which generously sustained a population that was growing rapidly yet unable to raise its level of passion. Moreover, the passioners had joined the drujinas of the izgoy-knàzs or the Varangian regiments in Tsargrad. The sub-passioners, meanwhile, lay idle in their homes, leading a quiet and peaceful life. For Prince Svyatopolk II's drujinas could inflict harm on whomever they pleased. In 1113, Svyatopolk II died. The legitimate heir was Prince David of Chernigov, who had some sensible supporters among Svyatopolk's entourage but possessed neither political ability nor a thirst for power. By this time, ethnic division in Kyiv had reached such a critical point that the instincts of the masses had overridden legal norms and state—

31 PL. H. 22, p. 20.

had become stronger than his enemies. The events that took place have been described far better by the chroniclers than I could ever do. The relevant studies, however, were carried out by V. N. Tatishchev.³²

Following the Grand Prince's death, discontent arose among the people in Kyiv against the very policy he had followed, and slogans such as "We do not want the Svyatoslavichs!" began to be chanted.³³ First, the homes of Putyat and his associates were plundered; the people's anger then turned towards the Jewish colony, where the princes who favoured a peaceful life had settled. The Jews gathered in the synagogue and, trusting in Vladimir Monomakh who was advancing from Pereyaslav, defended themselves heroically. The nobles of Kiev, however, managed to send men out to meet the prince, who had arrived with his *druzhina*. The prince entered the city amidst the acclaim of the people, the boyars and the archbishop, and took his seat on Kiev's golden throne.

Seeking to win the support of the people, Vladimir invited the princes gathered at Vidobich to a meeting. In accordance with the Grand Prince's proposal, the Jews were expelled from Russia without their property being confiscated; however, their right of return had been taken away. Not only was no protection provided for Jews returning secretly, but no guarantees were offered even in the event of their property being plundered or their lives being taken. Consequently, whilst the Jews had garnered the sympathy of the kings in Poland and Hungary, their influence had diminished to a noticeable extent.

There have been some fierce debates regarding the reliability of the information provided by V. N. Tatishchev. S. L. Peštich argued that the text presented by Tatishchev was 'forged'³⁴, whilst Y. M. Dobrushkin noted that in these regions

32 Tatišçeff V. N. *Istoriya Rossiyskaya*. Vol. II, pp. 128–130. The Ipatiev Chronicle records that the people of Kiev plundered Jewish homes. (PSRL. Vol. 22, Moscow, 1962, fol. 275). For a contemporary interpretation of these events, see: Grekov B. D. *Kiyevskaya Rus*, pp. 496–498; Tixomirov M. N. *Drevnaya Rus*, pp. 131–138.

33 These details are not found in the chronicles. Although this point escaped Tatišçeff's attention, it should be noted that Putyat was a supporter of David Svyatoslavich, who was a loyal confidant of Svyatopolk II but whose relations with Oleg—who had concluded a peace treaty with Monomakh as early as 1104—never improved.

34 Peštić, S. L. *Ruskaya istoriografiya XVIII v.* Vol. I. L., 1961, p. 250.

has noted that it is “usable”. Those who took the opposing stance were I. I. Smirnov,³⁶ B. A. Rybakov³⁷ and A. G. Kuzmin.³⁸ The latter, broadening the debate even further, even attempted to ignore the fact that it was common knowledge that the views on the Slavic nature of the Judeo-Khazars were outdated. The crux of D. S. Lihačyeff’s view is that whilst it is not possible to assume Tatiščeff’s text is a forgery, it must nevertheless be used with great caution.³⁹

This event occupies very little space in Russian history. This is because the social situation remained unchanged, no coups d’état had taken place, and artists continued to produce works with a zeal reminiscent of the spirit fostered in Byzantium. However, the same event held significant importance from an ethnic historical perspective. For whilst the historical zigzag that gave rise to ethnic identity drew a straight line, the history of the Eastern European ethnic groups had returned to its natural course.

89. In Conclusion

The fact that the Polovtsians had seized Tmutarakan after losing their dominion over half the continent was of little consequence. They had made no effort to mend their relations with the Jews, the Byzantines, or the steppe peoples (the Cumans, the Ases, the Kasogs). Their ties with certain Russian outcast princes were also very weak, and when Oleg Svyatoslavich slaughtered the Tmutarakan Khazars—referred to as the Eastern European Jews—at that time, the year 1083 ended in a massacre.

The Jews were forced to seek a new Khazaria, and indeed they had found it. The Jews’ most influential colony was in Al-Andalus, where they had taken refuge under the protection of the Umayyad caliphs. However, the caliphate, in 1031,

35 Dobruškin, Y. M. *On two entries in V. N. Tatishchev’s *History of Russia* for the year 1113 // Auxiliary Historical Disciplines*. Vol. 222. L., 1965, p. 290.

36 Smirnov, I. I. *Essays on the socio-economic relations of Russia in the 12th–13th centuries*. Moscow–Leningrad, 1963, pp. 252–265.

37 Rybakov B. A. *V. N. Tatishchev and the chronicles of the 13th century*//History of the USSR, 1970, no. 1.

38 Kuzmin A. G. *The entry for 1113 in V. N. Tatishchev’s *History of Russia* // *Vesti* MGU, 1972, No. 5.*

39 Likhachev D. S. *Can V. N. Tatishchev’s “History of Russia” be included in History of Russian Literature?*//Russian Literature. 1971, No. 1.

It was divided into some twenty-three dynasties. Some of these dynasties were Arab, some Berber, and some belonged to the Sakaliba, a group formed by slaves. However, with the exception of the sultans of Granada, none of them were fond of the Jews. But the Jews, without succumbing to despair, offered their assistance to King Alfonso VI of Castile. Alfonso conquered Castile, and as the Muslims had abandoned the city, he invited the Jews, granting them equal rights with Christians. He even made use of educated Jews as diplomats. Of course, the Jews were not always successful in this role. Indeed, in 1086, Castile's Jewish envoy behaved so arrogantly towards the Sultan of Seville, Mûtemid, that the latter could not tolerate it and had the envoy executed; naturally, this led to war between Castile and Seville. As a result of the war, the African Almoravids invaded the country and inflicted a heavy defeat on the Christians at the Battle of Zalak.⁴¹

The Castilians abandoned Toledo, but in 1108 they suffered yet another defeat at Ukles. The cause of the defeat was the flight from the battlefield of the Jews, who formed the left flank of the Castilian army. With their flight, the Muslims dealt such a severe blow to the Spaniards that even the crown prince lost his life. Enraged by this event, the Archbishop of Toledo, Bernardo, organised a massacre, but King Alfonso stood up for the Jews. In 1134, King Ramiro II of Aragon's decree granting equal legal status to Christians, Jews and Muslims in Aragon's four major cities protected the Jews from the wrath of the fanatical Berbers known as the Almohads.

The ethnic situation in the Christian part of Spain was dealt with in detail in a report prepared by the Cortes on 8 December 1812 concerning the reasons for the Inquisition. I quote verbatim: "The Jews (in Spain – L.G.) practised their religion freely and exercised their specific rights. They had their own courts. By being born to a Catholic mother, they converted to Catholicism, thereby benefiting from the protection of the law and attaining the most important positions. By remaining Jewish, they collected taxes and even received rewards. In contrast—

40 Müller, *History of Islam*, IV/167.

41 Lozinskiy, S. G. *History of the Inquisition in Spain*. St Petersburg, 1914, Vol. III, p. 9.

42 Ibid., p. 11.

43 Ibid., p. 6.

44 Ibid., p. 21.

According to the laws of Alfonso X, Christians could not work as servants in Jewish homes, could not visit them as guests, could not eat or drink with them; they could not bathe in the baths where Jews bathed, nor could they take medicines prepared by them... These were two peoples separated by laws and customs, yet they were considered a single nation. *For Jews to be baptised was a blatant act of hypocrisy!*"

Or was it ever going to be any different? Belonging to a religion reflects a worldview that has taken shape over the centuries within the framework of an ethnic group's specific prohibitions and permissions. Moreover, these prohibitions and permissions are perceived as natural, and are not even questioned, as if they had been perfectly devised. This is a behavioural pattern. The behavioural patterns of every nation are unique to it and certainly do not resemble those of others.

However, although the behavioural patterns of certain ethnic groups may be similar, these peoples do not exhibit the same behaviours at the super-ethnic level. Jews, Berbers and Spaniards belonged to different super-ethnic groups with the same or approximately the same level of passionate tension. In such cases, the ethnic stereotype generally loses its vitality.

The attempt to use the Spanish monarchs was an uninformed choice; however, as noted somewhat belatedly in the report mentioned above, it can be regarded as an experiment yielding one-sided results. Given that the document refers to the lengthy process of Castile's transformation from ethnic unity into a chimera, the authors were unaware of what measures had been taken to prevent the consequences of this 'ethnic historical zigzag'. This process lasted a full two hundred years, and the Jews, particularly Jewish women, exerted a significant influence on the Spanish nobility.

This process has been meticulously explored by L. Theichtwanger in his novel **Spanish Ballads**. Spain had become a Khazaria. The only difference was that the kings could not renounce Christianity. For a people undergoing the dynamic phase of ethnogenesis would not permit such a metamorphosis. Nevertheless, King Pedro the Cruel, whom the Spaniards considered half-Jewish, had attempted to eliminate the aristocracy.⁴⁵ It is difficult to judge whether this was a justifiable act; however, during the civil war, the Jewish community had supported King Pedro. Yet his death in 1369

45 Ibid., pp. 17–19.

After his death, the Spanish would grow in power and carry out a great massacre in 1391.⁴⁶ The Jews managed to escape the rampaging Christians by agreeing to be baptised during this massacre. Nevertheless, they continued to practise their own traditions and religious rites, and such a thing could not remain hidden for long. Thus, in 1478, during the reign of Isabella and Ferdinand, the Inquisition—that is, the cure for dangerous diseases—was invented to combat systematic falsehood. However, this matter is not our concern for the moment. So let us leave Castile aside and return to our main subject.

90. Vladimir Monomakh's Two Services to the ' '

The popular uprising had elevated Vladimir Monomakh—not merely a capable commander, but also a far-sighted statesman—to the Golden Throne of Kyiv. Monomakh had realised that living in peace with his own people was better and easier than relying on the support of his comrades-in-arms and wealthy foreigners. Consequently, the policy of the Kyiv state had been completely reversed. The senseless and burdensome war with the Polovtsians had been brought to an end; thus, the Western Polovtsian Federation (to use S. A. Pletnev's term) had been incorporated into Russian territory whilst retaining its right to autonomy. The Polovtsians beyond the Don, however, had defeated the Rus' allies, the Tork and Pechenegs, in 1116 as a reprisal for the events of 1111. These peoples would later become allies of the Suzdal princes.

Thus, the war of revenge between the Russians and the Polovtsians came to an end. However, the period that followed would be one in which the Polovtsians would meddle in the internal wars among the Russian princes.⁴⁷ In fact, the lands of the Dış-i Kıpçak and Kievan Rus' constituted the territories of a multi-centred state. At a time when an unexpected threat was emerging from the Turkmen-Seljuks in the south and from the Russians themselves in the west, this alliance was beneficial to both peoples.

Every feudal regime has its enemies. The system established by Monomakh was no exception in this regard. The disaffected gathered around Svyatopolk II and became his comrades-in-arms. As they were unable to play a role in the administration, their aim was to wage war against the Polovtsians.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 21.

⁴⁷ Pletněva S. A. *Drevneruskiye knàjestva X-XIII vv.*, p. 275.

As for financial matters, the princes obtained funds from Jewish communities, just as the emperors of the German Franconian dynasty had done. Unable to find supporters in the cities, they sought support from Western countries such as Poland and Hungary, recognising Yaroslav Svyatoslavich, who ruled the wealthy city of Volyn, as their natural leader.

It is difficult to say that the advisors—who were his father's former friends—advised the prince in this regard; yet that is precisely what he did. Nevertheless, this matter is of little importance to us. For the events themselves reveal everything.

Yaroslav Svyatoslavich fought heroically against the Polovtsians in 1111 and against the Yotvags in 1112–1113; he married Monomakh's granddaughter and, as far as can be seen, had reaffirmed his loyalty to the Golden Throne of Kiev. Nevertheless, he maintained his friendship with King Koloman of Hungary—the enemy of King Henry V of Germany, who had preserved his loyalty to the throne of Kiev—and with King Boleslav III of Poland, who was married to Monomakh's daughter and allied with the Hungarians. The German Empire was attempting to subjugate the Slavs and Hungarians.⁴⁸ The war began in 1110; whilst the Czechs recognised German rule, the Hungarians and Poles had repelled the German offensive in the east. But suddenly... around 1117, the Hungarian King Kalman openly sent his pregnant wife, Yevtimiya Vladimirovna,⁴⁹ the wife of Yaroslav Svyatopolkchich, a grandson of Monomakh, to Russia.⁵⁰ This was not a family scandal, but a clear act of defiance.

Monomakh sprang into action immediately. Prince Vladimir of Volyn had been besieged by the vast armies of the Russian princes, but on the 60th day of the siege, Yaroslav had granted his uncle a pardon. Of course, what matters is not this, but the behaviour of the people. During the days of the siege, the Volhynian boyars had supported their prince with all their might; yet, once the danger had passed and the enemy had withdrawn, both the boyars and the people had abandoned the prince. So, what had happened?

It might be thought that the cause of this corruption was unknown to the Volhynian public, but once peace was restored and the nature of the incident became clear, the conflict with Kyiv had resumed in 1113. The Kyivans—

⁴⁸ Veber, *General History*, VI/371.

⁴⁹ Pašuto, *Vnešnaya*, p. 167.

⁵⁰ Solovyev, *History of Russia*, Vol. I, Part II, pp. 391–392.

Like the people of Kiev, the Volhynian people felt no need to turn towards Catholic Europe. Indeed, in 1118, that is, after the enemy had been successfully repelled, their prince was forced to flee to Hungary; upon this, the boyars enthroned Monomakh's seven-year-old son, Andrei.

This episode was not merely a routine internal conflict of the sort frequently seen in Russia. For it provoked such serious external repercussions that it led to war with Poland and Hungary. Both kingdoms had pro-Russian and pro-German factions.⁵¹ Yaroslav, meanwhile, was attempting to lead the 'pro-Western' faction established by his father. Having previously been exiled, he had no army. In 1121, he attacked the city of Cherven with an army, but was repelled. In 1123, however, he marched on Vladimir with a large army composed of Ugrians, Czechs and Poles. The Galician princes Volodar and Vasilko, as well as the Hungarian King Stephen II (1115–1131) himself, joined him on the way.

The people of Volyn were prepared to fight to the death, but only a stroke of luck could have helped them. Yaroslav, whilst inspecting the city, had offered them the chance to surrender, threatening to punish the people, but had been caught off guard by a sudden attack. Two Polish soldiers in the service of Prince Andrey suddenly leapt out from among the bushes, stabbed Yaroslav in the stomach with a spear, and hid within the city. Following the prince's death, despite King Stephen's negotiations to prolong the siege, the army disbanded. It seems that the lack of potential allies in Russia had rendered continuing the campaign unattractive. Thus, the attempt to turn Russia into a fiefdom of the empire and a papal diocese came to an end.

It is, of course, inconceivable that a chance spear thrust could be sufficient to alter a historical theme on a super-ethnic scale; yet, albeit rarely, coincidences sometimes determine the course of historical development, and the effects of these zigzags are long-lasting. Such zigzags emerge when opposing forces are evenly matched, and God's divine will determines the outcome.

The year 1123 was indeed such a period. The prolonged civil war between the popes and the emperors, or between the Franks and the Saxons, had weakened the German Empire. The Concordat of Worms in 1122 signalled that the German people were utterly exhausted and could no longer...

⁵¹ Pașuto, *Vnešnaya*, pp. 151, 167–168.

It indicated that the campaign against the West had come to an end. Indeed, at a time when the paths were diverging, the renewed flames of war between the 'Christian World' and the Eastern Orthodox had spread to the west of the Carpathians, which provided Russia with the opportunity to strengthen itself ideologically and economically, whilst also embarking on the path to political unity. It is no coincidence that Monomakh's son Mstislav is known as 'Great Mstislav'.

Russia had finally established that, during the reigns of Vladimir Monomakh and Mstislav, it was a historical ally of Byzantium and even shared the same faith and laws.⁵² Vladimir Monomakh was now being referred to not merely as the 'Grand Prince', but as the 'Tsar'. However, as it was impossible to unite Catholics and Orthodox Christians on the same side, the unwelcome "Latinisation" spreading in Russia neither prevented Prince Izyaslav of Volhynia from seeking aid from Hungarian cavalry, nor led to any censure on account of his lack of religious affiliation. After all, these were not ethnic alliances, but religious ones.

This is why Vladimir Monomakh is rightly regarded as both the greatest commander and the most effective statesman of Old Russia. But unfortunately, his achievements were not commensurate with his stature. The wars with the Polovtsians took place during the reign of Prince Svyatopolk II, whereas during Monomakh's reign, peace prevailed. In essence, a final peace had not been secured; rather, the 'steppe fire' had lost its intensity by 1116, began to die down by 1125, and after 1132, new grass had grown, and the time had come for the Rus-Polovtsian symbiosis.

Could one boast of a victory won against an enemy with no chance of victory? The Russian population stood at 5–6 million, whilst that of the Polovtsians was only around 300–400 thousand. The Russians possessed well-fortified castles and skilled craftsmen who produced high-quality weapons for their warriors. Nor was there any risk factor for the Russians. For the Polovtsians had no allies behind them. Monomakh's service lay not in the victory over a weak enemy, but in securing the peace that laid the foundations for a 130-year-long Russo-Polovtsian alliance. This was by no means an insignificant service!

Consequently, the siege of Vladimir-Volyn in 1123 by the Hungarian-Czech and Polish armies, which included Russian allies—or rather, Vatican agents—among their ranks, marked the beginning of

⁵² Age., p. 186.

has given an idea of the tragic consequences that would become readily apparent when compared to the fate of the Polabian Slavs (the Ulichs). All the knights of Germany and the Italian merchants, who were in the midst of a tense and passionate phase, were Yaroslav Svyatopočič's inexhaustible reserve. The Hungarians required only local guides and the assistance of the local population to cross the Dnieper, but the far-sighted Vladimir Monomakh, who acted in harmony with the people, had deprived them of this opportunity. Consequently, when Monomakh presented to the people a programme of alliance with Byzantium and peace with the Polovtsians and the hostile West, it was accepted without a second thought by public opinion, as if it were a matter of no consequence.

Hungary had missed its chance to stage a coup; the pro-Western former Russians were divided amongst themselves; yet Orthodoxy had saved Russia from an attempted invasion that was to be repeated a century later. For this reason alone, Russia was bound to be grateful to Vladimir Monomakh.

As mentioned earlier, the war had shifted to Hungarian territory; however, the upper hand had passed to the Byzantines. Boris, the son of King Kalman and the grandson of Monomakh—born to the Hungarian king's wife who was in exile in Russia—arrived in Byzantium in 1129 and was sent to Hungary by Emperor Manuel as crown prince. King Stephen II accepted him into the royal family and confirmed his claim to the throne, but the state council opposed this, putting forward Prince Bela—whose eyes had been gouged out by Kalman—as a candidate for the throne. Stephen and Boris relied on the Greeks and Polovtsians; Bela, on the other hand, relied on the Germans and Czechs.

When Stephen died in 1131, the flames of war engulfed the land. The Poles and Russians, who had come to Boris's aid, were put to the sword by the Germans in 1133. Lothair of Saxony made peace with his enemies in 1135, but following the emperor's death in 1137, the Austrian chancellor and the Duke of Bohemia—who had previously been Boris's enemies—used this event as a pretext to invade from the Hungarian border, though they suffered a heavy defeat in 1146. Boris fled to Byzantium, where he received support from Emperor Manuel; he took part in the wars the emperor waged against the Hungarians and was killed during a skirmish with the Cumans, who were fighting under Hungarian banners at the time. As you can see, this prince had fallen victim to super-ethnic conflict.

Taking all this into account, the Russian lands were the most fortunate. Of course, there were internal conflicts here and there, but these did not prevent the construction of monumental buildings or the creation of significant works. Until the year 1200, the Russian lands were a land of plenty; the people were cultured and faced no threats. Byzantium, which had inherited a fortune and a magnificent culture from the warrior Komnenos emperors, had not set its sights on Russia's borders because it was allied with it. In the West, the power of the Hanseatic knights and merchants had grown considerably, yet thanks to the Lithuanians, Latvians, Curonians and Estonians, the Russian principality remained safe from the aggression of the Germans and Danes. The Polovtsians, routed by Vladimir Monomakh, were seeking ways to forge friendships with the Russian princes; they were converting to Christianity in tribal groups and repelling the attacks of the Seljuks, the representatives of the 'Islamic World', which was at that time divided into many rival sultanates. Indeed, the Georgians had achieved victory over the Seljuks with the help of the Polovtsians [Kipchaks]. The Kingdom of Lash, founded by David, Queen Tamara and Georgios, was also an ally of Russia, just like Byzantium. Russian lands seemed destined to remain a paradise for all time, yet these words would not appear in the 13th-century works known as the 'Epic of Russia's Demise'. The author of these lines is well aware that he is speaking of a 'sweet autumn'.

Let us shed some light on the matter. The inertial force unleashed by the first wave of ethnogenesis around the 13th century was, as the ancient Russian author noted in the 'Tale of Igor's Campaign'—which depicts the strife between the knazates—in a state of turmoil. What we call civil war is, of course, the conflict between feudal lords. Such wars existed everywhere. For example, in France among the barons, in Syria among the emirs, in India among the Rajputs, in Germany among the dukes of the Holy Roman Empire, in Japan between the Minamoto and the Taira, and in England between kings and their heirs. These wars held different meanings for the country and its people everywhere, but only in 13th-century Russia did they lead to a tragic end.

Why? Or was there something else?

91. The Legacy of Grand Prince Mstislav

Mstislav, the eldest son of Vladimir Monomakh, was one of his father's loyal and capable aides. His determination and exceptional administrative

not only saved the Principality of Kiev from collapse but also secured Russia's political unity. In 1127, Mstislav incorporated the Principality of Polotsk into Russian territory, though the captured princes of Polotsk were sent to Constantinople. It was no coincidence that the chronicler referred to him as the 'Great Prince', and the Orthodox Church had honoured him for the laws he had enacted. However, after his death in 1132, ethnic centrifugal forces would drive Kievan Rus' towards disintegration. Internal strife had broken out, bloody conflicts had taken place; the time had come not for the ethnic group, but for the state's political collapse.⁵³

Following the death of Grand Prince Mstislav, the 12th-century princes of the Uliush became the sovereign rulers of their own principalities. This was because they were supported by their subjects, who were eager to break away from Kyiv. The Olgovichs of Chernigov—Vsevolod II and Igor II—ascended the Golden Throne of Kiev in succession, yet they were not popular with the people of Kiev. Conspirators invited Izyaslav Mstislavich to ascend the throne, and the people sided with Izyaslav when he arrived in Kyiv with his army in 1146. Igor, who had been taken captive, was torn to pieces by the people of Kyiv a year later. When Yuriy Dolgorukiy, Prince of Suzdal and the legitimate heir of Momo-mah, was poisoned in 1157, his son Andrey entered Kyiv in 1169. For three days, his army plundered the people from head to toe with a savagery that only foreigners could muster.

It was not passionate tension, but rather the unbridled instincts characteristic of the inertial phase of ethnogenesis that are evident in this and many similar events in the history of the collapse of Kievan Rus'. Fortunately, there were no powerful enemies at their borders. The Polovtsians, defeated by Vladimir Monomakh, were plundering Russian lands not on their own, but as allies of the feuding princes.⁵⁴ The Western Slavs were occupied with halting the Germans' 'advances into the east'. The Volga Bulgars were constantly at war with the cities of Suzdal and Murom, solely for the purpose of capturing prisoners of war. The Bulgars had filled their harems; the Russians, however, had come out entirely worse for wear. The mixed-race children born of such marriages were considered legitimate, but the exchange of gene pools had failed to bring about the union of the two neighbouring ethnic groups. Genetic intermingling, the similarity of economic and social lifestyles, the homogeneity of geographical resources, the Slavs and Bulgars

53 Rybakov, *Kievan Rus' and the Russian Principalities of the 12th–13th Centuries*, p. 472 ff.

54 Gumilev L. N. *Myth and Reality // Problems of Reconstruction in Ethnography*. Novosibirsk, 1984, pp. 5–24.

, despite the fact that the majority of these peoples had only a very superficial knowledge of each other's religious and worldview dogmas, Christianity and Islam had separated the Russians and the Bulgars from one another.

Strangely enough, whilst the nomadic Polovtsians voluntarily embraced Christianity, the pagan Yatvags preferred death or harsh captivity and refused to be baptised. Meanwhile, the Russians managed to preserve their ethnic unity despite fierce civil wars and the breakdown of political unity. It seems that, in this context, one must take into account not only ethnogenesis but also culturogenesis. Although these two processes are as inseparable as back and belly, they are not identical to one another.

Although politically fragmented, we should recall that up until the 10th century, the Slavic world presented itself as a super-ethnic unity. In reality, however, these two ethnic groups had already experienced a phase of fragmentation as early as the 9th century; subsequently, the situation began to change and gradually became more consolidated.

In the East, that is, in Byzantium, where the traditions of the great councils of the 5th–6th centuries were preserved and church liturgies influenced the general form of the Greek language, faith formed the basis of cultural unity. Consequently, in Greek cities, there were constant debates on dogmatic issues, morality, the Bible and other theological matters. Spiritual practices were an integral part of the communities, and for this reason, well-educated individuals such as Tarasios, Nikephoros and Photios were able to become archbishops.⁵⁵

Consequently, Cyril and Methodius, who propagated Orthodoxy, brought sacred texts for the Slavs. There was nothing in their sermons that conflicted with science or education. The Slavs were pleased with this situation and, by accepting Christianity, were emerging from 'barbarism' and reaching the same level as the Greeks. Talented Slavic youths who acquired the necessary knowledge of Christianity, such as St. Hilarion, could become archbishops and educate their own congregations in the language of the church and its rites. This is why Christianity took root in the Bulgarian Kingdom and the Kievan Rus', but suffered defeat in Moravia, the aggressive neighbour of Bavaria.

During the Carolingian period, however, the spread of Christianity in Western Europe took a completely different form. There, Christianity

55 Florya B. N. *Skazaniya o načale slavyanskoy pismennosti*. M., 1981, p. 35.

56 Ibid., pp. 51–52.

The prevailing view was that faith was a hidden science to be discovered only through spirituality. This notion persisted until the 8th century. This was because the Council of Frankfurt, convened in 794, had abolished the requirement that the liturgical language be conducted in Hebrew, Greek or Latin; however, this decision was subsequently forgotten. Consequently, in the West, the custom of praying in one's native language in daily life was confined to personal prayer and religious propaganda.⁵⁷

The necessity of using one of these three languages truly paved the way for the rise of Christianity. This was because learning Hebrew was only possible in Muslim Córdoba, where the Jewish community resided. Greek, on the other hand, could not be learnt anywhere, as the iconoclasts—regarded as heretics in Byzantium—were in power. Nevertheless, by the early 830s, German clergy had succeeded in Christianising Moravia. However, after 846, Prince Rostislav appealed to Byzantium, requesting that an archbishop be sent to 'teach them Christianity'.⁵⁸

The history of Cyril and Methodius's subsequent activities has not been definitively recorded, right up to the tragic end that befell them. Svyatopolk, the nephew of Prince Rostislav, betrayed Methodius and his teachings in 879, allying himself with the Germans and sacrificing his people to the pagan Hungarians. Nevertheless, the Russians living along the main route 'from the Varangians to the Greeks' used their skills in trade and diplomacy to turn a deaf ear to religious propaganda that sought to restrict their free conscience; only Olga and her grandson Vladimir consciously chose the Greek faith.

57 Ibid., pp. 26–27.

58 Ibid., p. 26.

XV. OTHER RELIGIONS, OTHER VIEWS

92. Old Gods and New Demons

Paganism was multifaceted. Christianity achieved a swift victory in Kyiv, made slow progress in Novgorod; and in Rostov and Murom, where the Slavic population was clearly in the minority, it advanced very slowly. The ethnic mosaic of the north-eastern regions of the Kievan Rus' provided fertile ground for polytheism, that is, an extremely tolerant worldview. In other words, these people showed respect not only for their own tribal gods but also for those of their neighbours, and perhaps even assisted them.

This form of polytheism was present in the ancient Near East, where the Chaldeans, Arameans and Jews worshipped not only their own gods but also their neighbours' Baals, Molochs and Astartes, purely to secure their assistance and win them over to their side. It was then that genotheism—the act of worshipping one's own god—began. Only certain prophets defended monotheism at the cost of making many enemies.¹ A similar situation can be observed in the lands of Old Russia. An anonymous 14th-century author notes that those of dual faith “were not Christians; rather, they believed in a total of twenty gods, such as Perun, Hors, Mokosh, Sima, Regla and Vilo”, and states that “they worshipped fire and called this god they worshipped Svarozhitsa”.² This information indicates that what is at issue here is not an Olympian pantheon hierarchy, but rather an eclectic synthesis of certain half-forgotten traditions. Perun is a god who fought against Christ in the 14th century.³ Hors means ‘sun’ (Persian: Huršid) and is associated with ancient Mithraism

1 Turayev B. A. *History of Ancient Voktok*. Vol. II. St Petersburg, 1913, pp. 92–104.

2 Gumilevskiy, F. *History of the Church*, p. 45.

3 Perun's last patron was the Grand Duke of Lithuania, Olgerd; however, his sons and nephews had been baptised. (*Ibid.*, pp. 40–43).

is his legacy. Vilo are the spirits of the dead, but although they were worshipped in the 11th–12th centuries, the nature of the others is unknown.

These were ‘struggles taking place on high’, but they descended ‘downwards’ into our world and took on a material form. Whilst the golden dome of St Sophia’s Cathedral rose in Kiev, Chernigov and Novgorod, the idol of Velas, patron of herds and vast pastures, was being erected in Rostov on the outskirts of the Chud lands. Velas was a god belonging to the Mithraic cult. The Christian bishops Theodor and Illarion had fled Rostov due to the persecution of the Meryans. Theodor had only managed to succeed in the villages around the city of Suzdal, which belonged solely to the Slavs; Saint Leontius, the successor to the fleeing bishops, had been captured whilst spreading his message. Leontius was killed around 1070 after a long period of torture; his successors, Saint Isai and the evangelist Avraamiy, achieved great success by converting many Merya people to Christianity.

The Slavs adopted Christianity rather reluctantly; indeed, the Vyatichi had even killed the missionary Kukša in the early 12th century. In the south-eastern regions, Kursk was the only Christian city. The cities of Mtsensk, Bryansk and Kozelsk, however, retained their paganism and only converted to Christianity towards the middle of the 12th century.

The situation in Murom was even more complicated, as Christianity had to contend not only with stubborn paganism but also with Muslim missionaries from Great Bulgaria. It was only around 1092 that the Spakskiy Monastery was founded in the vicinity of Murom, and subsequently the Chernigov princely dynasty began to exercise authority in the city. However, the region around Mordva continued to harbour hostility towards Christianity.

Finally, the ruins of Yomal, north of the Zavolotskaya Chud people living in the lands of Biarmiya or Great Perm, were defended against the Norwegians and the Novgorodians. Paganism held its ground against Christianity until 1318; everything only changed in the 14th century, and ‘Holy Russia’ was born on the site of the ancient villages that had been sacrificed.

In the 11th century, Christianity suddenly acquired an unexpected new enemy. The teachings of the sorcerers differed from the syncretism that persisted in North-Eastern Russia until the 14th century. The first volhovs (sorcerers) appeared in Suzdal in 1024. They claimed that a famine that occurred at that time was caused by women—

They were inciting the people against them. The Volhovlans, using the same tactics, later advanced from Rostov to Beloozero (Akgöl) in 1077–1078, killing many women. Their final act took place in Novgorod in 1223, but they were captured by the people and burned. Yet the same people had protected the sorcerers against the princes in the 11th century.

The principles of the sorcerers' faith were written down by Boyar Yan. According to the sorcerers, "While God was bathing, He was scrubbed with a cloth and then cast it onto the earth. Later, the Devil (probably from this cloth, – L.G.) created man, and God gave him a soul"⁴ When asked, "Who are your gods?", the sorcerers would point to the lines on the icon and claim that these gods had revealed their secrets to them.

It is surprising that a false priest whom Rubruck encountered in Mongolia in 1253 believed that the body (that is, matter) had been created by the Devil, whilst the soul had been placed within that body by God.⁵ This form of dualism, which differs from other dualist views, dates back as far as Manichaeism, or more precisely Bogomilism; yet it cannot be compared to naturalist cults or even ancestor worship. No, this is an anti-system conceived and crystallised from a psychological perspective; yet it bears no relation to the logic upon which the Inquisition judges Sprenger and Institoris based their actions, claiming that the Devil faithfully serves God's rule whilst remaining in a monist position.⁶

93. Dualistic Belief

Byzantine culture—that is, Christianity and literacy—had, after the 11th century, broken the open resistance of warrior paganism, or, to put it another way, the sorcerers in the Novgorod and Rostov regions; but this situation applied only to cities and fortified monasteries. The people, who had their own religion, cult and gods, were not inclined to bow down before a foreign religious doctrine. Indeed, since the people had multiple gods, none of whom resembled one another, the outcome of Christianity's ideological struggle against paganism was a foregone conclusion.

4 Gumilevskiy, *History of the Church*, p. 53.

5 *Travels to the Eastern Lands: The Plans of Karnini and Rubruka*, p. 157.

6 Sprenger, J. and Institoris, *The Hammer of the Witches*, pp. 159–161.

Christianity had a well-organised structure. It benefited from the support of the authorities and offered its adherents the opportunity to infiltrate world culture, thereby nurturing the Russian 'passioners'—those who sought prestige within the monolithic state established by Vladimir Monomakh and his son Mstislav. However, the only things that concerned the ordinary Slav, who was psychologically attuned and possessed a certain cultural level, were fortune-telling, avoiding nocturnal calamities, making amends with the forest giants so as not to disturb his herd in the woods, and getting on well with the spirits of the ancestors—the ifrits. Consequently, whilst Christianity was successful in Old Russia, it could not contend with the old worldview, which had also been adopted by the ruling elite. Indeed, even the Russian saints, despite never compromising on their religious principles, believed in the existence of evil forces because the Bible spoke of Satan and demons. The outcome of this struggle against paganism—that is, against popular beliefs—was, though not entirely fruitless, rather lacklustre.

The bourgeoisie's commonplace assertion that Slavic paganism represents an optimistic worldview is far from the truth. Indeed, it is a foolish notion! B. A. Rybakoff has, surprisingly, demonstrated that the term 'paganism' arbitrarily encompasses three distinct cults. These are: the cult of ancestral spirits hostile to the living—that is, vampire spirits; the cult of nature spirits, likely another variant of Mithraism; and the cult of Perun, which was re-established in the Baltic Sea basin in the 9th century. The latter was widespread among the warrior and nomadic Varangians, Prussians and Polabian Slavs in Lithuania.⁸ This cult could not hold its ground against Christianity, which was much older in Russia. This is because the Goths had adopted Christianity in the 4th century, whilst in the West, the Temple of Svyatovit had been destroyed by the Germans by the end of the 12th century. Consequently, although the role it played between the 9th and 11th centuries is by no means insignificant, the cult of Perun remains an episode in the history of Eastern Europe.

Mithraism, a truly optimistic religion that spread from the Great Wall of China to the Atlantic Ocean, has given way to Christianity, Islam and theistic Buddhism. Its history is another matter that does not concern us for the time being. The issue of ancient beliefs, which remains unresolved and, in his view, cannot be settled once and for all—

7 Ribakov B. A. *The Writing of the Ancient Slavs*. Moscow, 1981, pp. 15–17.

8 Ibid., pp. 19 and 25.

is far more important.⁹ But resolving this issue is no easy task. Why?

In the 10th century, the peoples of Eastern Europe were a mixed lot, yet they were sufficiently passive to allow the Kievan princes to unite the vast territories they had conquered. The lack of resistance capability among the Finnic, Ugric, Baltic and even Slavic tribes indicates that the majority of them were remnants of ancient, intertwined ethnogenesis. In a figurative sense, these were not young generations, but old ones. Even the youngest among them—such as the Radimichs and Vyatichs—had already passed the 800-year mark, and a 1,000-year incubation period was to be expected. Consequently, their worldviews—which were certainly not original—had begun to resemble one another to the extent that they could be considered as a whole, essentially forming a mosaic.

Christian writers attribute the emergence of countless languages to the destruction of the Tower of Babel and the mingling of languages.¹⁰ The desire for the building under construction to be sturdy seems to have led to the emergence of what folklorists and ethnographers refer to as ‘foundation sacrifices’. People were buried alive in the foundations of castles and city fortresses.¹¹ Even as late as the 19th century, our own villagers would sacrifice a rooster, a lamb or some other animal¹² in honour of the earth gods when building a house or founding a new village.¹³

As one reads these accounts, one cannot help but remember with fondness the Roman Emperor Theodosius I, who banned the practice of human sacrifice in order to put an end to the ‘killing of innocent creatures’. Yet our ancestors were a step ahead of the Greeks and Romans in this regard. For they chose children as ‘foundation-laying sacrifices’! “There is a legend told about Novgorod: when Slavyansk became depopulated and the need arose to found a new city, the elders, in accordance with ancient customs, sent men out in all directions at sunrise to sacrifice the first living creature they encountered—

9 Vetlovskaya, V. Y. *Dostoevsky's Work in the Context of Literary and Folkloric Parallels*. “The Foundational Sacrifice” // *Myth-Folklore-Literature*. L., 1978, p. 103.

10 Frezer, Dj. *Folklore in the Old Testament*. Moscow–Leningrad, 1931, pp. 137–138.

11 Zelenin, D. *Totem Trees in Legends about the Rites of European Peoples*. Moscow–Leningrad, 1937, p. 3.

12 Nikiforovskiy, M. *Russian Paganism*. St Petersburg, 1875, p. 38.

13 Afanasyev, A. N. *The Slavs' Poetic Views on Nature*. Vol. 2. Moscow, 1868, p. 83.

They ordered them to be captured and brought back. Those who set out came across a child and thus buried him alive at the foundation of the castle later known as Detinsi (Child) Castle.”¹⁴ Such strange customs also existed in Germania and Britain.¹⁵ In Russia and Bulgaria, however, children who had not yet been baptised were hidden beneath the thresholds of huts right up until the 19th century.¹⁶

This strange belief, an echo of a forgotten religion, is most likely one of the ancient Satanist cults. Although it may seem to have no place in the Age of Enlightenment, please regard it as the ordinary mistake of an optimist.¹⁷

94. “The Enchanted ‘ ’ Spirits”

Christianity had barely managed to take root in Kievan Rus’, but faced even greater difficulties among the Slavic tribes conquered by the Kievan princes. Although Vladimir Monomakh had achieved a military victory over the Slavic pagans, the Vyatichi, a spiritual—or rather, ideological—victory would not come until the 14th century. In the strict sense of the word, dual faith persisted for a long time in Russia itself (Kiev, Chernigov and Pereyaslav). One of the followers of Christ wrote: “I cannot tolerate a Christian who lives by dual faith; who believes in Perun, Hors and other gods.”¹⁸ Although Christian missionaries and princes had put an end to the practices of those who worshipped Perun (praying to him) and those who invoked Hors (fire-worshippers), and put an end to the work of the Satanist volhovs who sacrificed women to evil spirits; yet the ancient cult of worshipping the spirits of the dead would persist until the 20th century.

These spirits (ifrits) did not ask for much from the living. All they asked for was that a table be set on blessed Thursdays, and that it be clean

14 Vetlovskaya V. Y. *Brotherhood*, p. 104.

15 Veselovskiy A. N. *From the History of Literary Society*. St Petersburg, 1872, pp. 305–307.

16 Afanasyev A. N. *Poetic Works*, Vol. 2, p. 113; Moscow, 1869, pp. 237, 799.

17 V. Y. In Vetlovskaya’s aforementioned work, it is noted that whilst N. A. Nekrasov wrote that ‘when blood was shed at its foundation, the building became sturdy’, the vein of paganism swelled; whereas F. M. Dostoyevsky, in response, stated that even if all the world’s bounties were bestowed, this would not be worth the shedding of an innocent baby’s blood.

18 Galkovskiy, N. ‘*The Struggle of Christianity against the Remnants of Paganism in Ancient Rus’* // *Proceedings of the Moscow Archaeological Institute*. Vol. X. Moscow, 1913, p. 1.

It involved preparing a warm bathhouse with towels laid out. Indeed, these people would scatter ashes on the floor of the bathhouse; the next day, they would see marks resembling chicken tracks on these ashes and, concluding that the bathhouse had been visited by the deceased, they would say, 'The spirits have come to bathe with us.' It is conceivable that the saints also believed the spirits had come, but the most interesting aspect is that they had absolutely no doubts about it. A bathhouse was prepared for the ifrits; once it had been steamed, people did not set foot there until the following day. Naturally, all these ritual ceremonies were by no means considered a burden.

The table to which the spirits were invited also had to be perfect: a jug of milk, a tray full of meat, buttermilk, bread and salt. All of these were to be placed in the loft of the house, and it was considered most desirable to carry out this task as secretly as possible. The spirits were said to be extremely pleased and would remark: "We have been guests of the Bulgars; we have been guests of the Kipchaks; we have been hosted by the Chuds, the Vyatichs and the Slovenes; we have been to other lands; but we have never seen such generous, such honourable, such obedient people."¹⁹

Christians, on the other hand, revered demonic spirits and selected their sacrificial offerings from uneducated (ignorant or flawed) individuals. But we are concerned with something else: the various cults that we have grouped together under the common term 'paganism'. It was not only the Polovtsians, who worshipped Mengü Mavi Gökyüzüne-Tengri, the Bulgar Muslims and the Finns (Chuds), but also the Slavic tribes – the Novgorod Slovenes and the Vyatichi – who possessed distinct cults that were in no way compatible with Christianity. Consequently, Christianity, with its rigid system—that is, a church organisation supported by the ruling powers—was marching from victory to victory.

However, as noted in the work entitled 'On the False Prophet', which dates from around the 13th century, this movement was to lose momentum due to the disloyalty of a large proportion of the clergy.²⁰ Although this book is a compilation,²¹ it is an accurate diagnosis of the unwelcome phenomena, particularly the disregard for the prohibitions brought by Christianity. The favour shown to fortune-tellers, the proliferation of debauchery—

19 Ibid., pp. 5–7.

20 Ibid., p. 56.

21 For similar things are also recounted in the 'Works of John Chrysostom'. Vol. 8, Book 2, p. 706.

This suggests that, at first glance, the worldview prevailing in Russia in the 13th century was undergoing a period of crisis, and that atheism was emerging as a rival to Christianity.²²

The phase of obscuration generally proceeds slowly. Here and there, pathological symptoms emerge, resembling the signs of ailments that were initially easily treatable, but which then spread deeply into the social fabric and ultimately paralysed it. The presence of a few cults—that is, behavioural patterns—within a state system never allows for the strengthening of social systems, particularly when passive tension subsides. Nevertheless, the fact that deeply rooted Christianity did not give rise to chimeras was a stroke of luck for Russia. For it was precisely this that had caused the Khazar Khaganate to breathe its last. So, why did chimeras not form in Russia?

At the level of ethnic contact, the difference between the Khazar and Kievan Khaganates lay in the fact that foreigners arrived in Khazaria, whereas foreign ideas flooded into Russia. D. S. Lihacheff refers to this type of ethno-cultural contact as ‘transplantation’, that is, the grafting of views, knowledge, concepts and disciplines—but never of people. Some Greek masters who came to Kievan Sophia and occupied certain institutions there were lost among the highly intelligent Russian masses, who had long since embraced Christianity. It was easy to educate the Russians; however, tribal bonds made every kind of activity even easier. Just as much as the archbishops and clergy, sorcerers, charmers, healers, warriors, merchants and knàz were local people. The ethnic formation of Christians and pagans was synchronous, and consequently, syncretism—a socio-cultural phenomenon—did not influence the natural process of ethnogenesis. The general decline of fanaticism first reduces the intensity of religious wars and subsequently opens the door to mutual tolerance. Indeed, paganism and Christianity developed side by side in Russia; a unique ideology known as ‘dual faith’ emerged, which endured for centuries precisely because there was no mutual antagonism. Although spirits began to be called ‘devils’, the Slavs’ outlook on life and the world remained unchanged.

Perhaps that was not the case; the adoption of Greek beliefs and culture led to the system becoming somewhat complex, meaning that the demand exceeded

22 “... even those who were baptised did not believe in Christ” (*The Struggle of Christianity*, p. 67)

. In the 12th century, the Germans prevailed where paganism had grown weary—among the Polabian Slavs—; whereas in regions where robust systems existed—Russia, Poland and Czechoslovakia—the German advance was halted. Thus, ‘enchanted spirits’, though not in great numbers, played a positive role in Slavic ethnogenesis. Consequently, the Church’s supporters were relieved once they had eradicated the cults that had adopted bloody sacrificial rites resembling Satanism.

In matters concerning the people’s daily needs, however, people still turned to sorcerers, and in certain matters—such as the treatment of minor ailments—the desired results were achieved. However, the doctor of that time was not called a sorcerer, but rather a ‘healer’ in the sense of someone who knew certain special treatment methods.

The Church took a tougher stance against sorcerers and fortune-tellers. Since the existence of demons was taken as a given, contact with them was perceived as both a sign of superiority and of double-dealing. “Whoever consults a sorcerer for any matter shall be subjected to a double punishment; first, they shall observe a forty-day penitential fast, prostrating themselves 300 times a day, and thereafter shall be fed on bread and water for two years. For he has set aside God’s grace and, believing in sorcery and seeking aid from jinn, has turned to them.”²³ The form of punishment is clear; but let us recall that in France and Germany, those who committed the same offence faced the cauldron.

Daily beliefs and customs, the legacy of forgotten cultures, persisted in this way despite orthodoxy, scholasticism, positivism and scientific atheism. The only difference between the present day and the past is that sorcerers are now called psychics.

* *
*

Satanism is a constant phenomenon, independent of one’s upbringing or level of civilisation. It was customary for a woman to ask for time off work to visit the grave of a relative at the Novodevichy Cemetery in Moscow. On one occasion, a woman, having obtained permission from her superiors, got up early, bought a bouquet of flowers, and made her way across the city from one end to the other in the early morning twilight to reach the cemetery.

²³ “Pravila svyatix otets” (See Proxorov G. M., Rozov N. N. *Prečen knig Kirilla Beložerskogo*//TODRL. XXX vol. L., 1981, pp. 376–377).

She showed her permit and began looking for the grave, but lost her way. A man appeared before her. The woman asked him for directions. He explained, but gave her the wrong information. This time, the woman said, "It's still twilight; I'm afraid of the dead," and asked him to take her to the grave. The man escorted the woman with the utmost courtesy as far as the entrance to the path, then suddenly touched her shoulder and asked: "Tell me, why do people fear us?" – "Ah!.."

Whether this is a fairy tale or reality is of little importance. My request to the reader is to put themselves in this woman's shoes for a moment. Then they will understand what 'Satanism' is. Of course, these tales have no connection to reality. On the contrary, there is a branch of science known as ethnography. It is a discipline that links us, the people of the 20th century, to our ancestors, and them to theirs—in short, it connects all of humanity to a common ancestor. Ethnography is a humanistic science. This discipline deals not only with what actually exists, but also with what people perceive and how they adjust their behaviour accordingly. Even a trade union member working for a wage would remain indifferent to the incident described above.

95. Loneliness

It follows, then, that the fact that two irreconcilable worldviews do not lead to tragic consequences in everyday life, thanks to tolerance, applies to elderly ethnic groups that have expended their energy on excessive passivity. The existence of differing views and tastes does not prevent people of dual faiths from ploughing the land, building towers, or forging swords and shields. Twelfth-century Russia was a wealthy, cultured and relatively populous country. The political problems facing the princes were so simple that they could be easily resolved with the help of boyars and archbishops who had studied not only Orthodoxy but also diplomacy in Constantinople. It was in such a country that science could flourish.

But, if everything was so idyllic, why did Old Russia vanish from the world political map within a century?

The similarity, or even identity, of the dominant ideologies of different ethnic groups does not necessitate their assimilation, even if they have emerged from the same cultural fabric. Being Christian did not Russify the Byzantines; on the contrary, it even pitted these two nations against one another. For example, the wars fought over the Black Sea came to an end in the 11th century;

Vladimir Monomakh's attempt in 1116 to reclaim the former Ulič lands at the mouth of the Danube ended in failure. Moreover, it is difficult to determine whether armed clashes took place there, or whether Voivode Ivan Voitišič withdrew without fighting after concluding that the Greeks were far stronger than himself.

When the Kievan Rus' abandoned its efforts to unify the Russian lands, the rulers of the principalities began to join European coalitions. In the 1040s, whilst Kiev formed an alliance with the Hungarians against Byzantium, the principalities of Galicia and Rostov-Suzdal sided with Byzantium against Kiev and the Hungarians. However, in the 60s, whilst Kyiv was allied with Byzantium, Yaroslav Osmomysl of Galicia, alongside the Hungarians, supported the famous adventurer Andronikos Komnenos. Of course, all of this was merely a diplomatic game and by no means signified a severing of cultural ties. For instance, whilst Russian monks were flocking to Athos, a Russian quarter had also emerged in Constantinople. Russians and Greeks lived amicably, yet without intermingling.

The Komnenos period is regarded as the Golden Age of Byzantium. At least, that was how it appeared from the outside. Victories were being won one after another, and culture was flourishing ceaselessly. According to the historians of the Crusades, Constantinople had monopolised three-quarters of the world's riches, whilst the remaining quarter was scattered amongst other nations. But from an ethnological perspective, things were in a terrible state. The three great Komnenos rulers had won victory after victory and enjoyed days of splendour thanks to their accumulated wealth. To defend the borders, they relied not on their own citizens but on mercenary Varangians and Franks; in their cavalry units, they employed Pechenegs and Cumans. Naturally, the naval fleets were also entrusted to the Genoese and Pisans. Emperor Manuel's entourage was surrounded by French knights and ladies. Indeed, the empress herself was a lady named Maria of Antioch.

Consequently, by the end of the 12th century, Russia's relations with Byzantium were somewhat different. They would quarrel over matters of no consequence, yet become friends over issues that were impossible to resolve. These were speculative relationships rather than emotional connections, which was a natural consequence of the waning of passionate tensions on both sides.

The situation was even worse during the Angelos period. These incompetent rulers had squandered not only Bulgaria but also the esteemed Slavic Orthodox communities. By the 13th century, all that remained of the Greek-Russian common ground were the cultural relics destroyed in 1204.

The Russians' relations with the Georgians, who shared their religious beliefs, were somewhat different. In 1185–1186, they had given Queen Tamara in marriage to Yuri Bogolubsky, the son of Andrei. However, Andrei's son Yuri, whilst somewhat coarse, was an energetic, capable, brave and talented commander. Naturally, he possessed a trait typical of Easterners: he was somewhat of an alcoholic. Tamara could not tolerate this man and sent him off to Constantinople with a great deal of wealth. But Yuri, having squandered the money in no time, returned to Georgia via Erzurum and raised the banner of rebellion. It is surprising that nearly half of the Georgians sided with him, but I suppose they saw the prince as someone defending their own rights. However, Tamara emerged victorious. The Georgian princes, accepting defeat, handed Yuri over. Nevertheless, Tamara released him and allowed him to go to Russia. However, on this occasion, the princes of Suzdal rebelled and refused to accept Yuri. Consequently, Yuri married a Polovtsian woman, arrived in Arran in 1193, and, with the atabeg's assistance, re-entered Georgia; yet, no further news was heard of him. No ethnic contact had taken place.

The situation with the Roman-Catholic countries of Germanic origin, including Slavic Poland, had become even more complicated. For here, despite the political alliances mentioned above, there could be no friendship at the ethnic level. The Russians regarded the Greeks, Georgians, Karelians and Izhorians as their own; but they viewed the Swedes, Germans, French and Italians as foreigners. And this was despite trivial theological and dogmatic differences that were of little concern to either the masses or the state authorities. Between us, the prevailing mindset had even stifled philosophical understanding in the West.

The Catholics did not regard the Greeks, Bulgarians and Russians as peoples sharing the same faith. Indeed, this philosophy of alienation, which first emerged between 858 and 867, would, three hundred years later, turn into religious wars against the Orthodox. These wars benefited neither side. Moreover, the logic behind these wars remained a mystery even to those studying contemporary events.

Metropolitan John IV (1080–1089) had sent the following lines to Pope Gregory VII (1073–1085): 'I do not know how these obstacles and heresies have arisen in the way of God; nor do I know how they might be rectified. I am utterly bewildered; what evil spirit... what enemy of truth and unity, by claiming that we are not Christians, is alienating your brotherly love from the

Christian world? Yet we, even though you have opposed us on many matters, have always regarded you as Christians from the very beginning.”²⁴

The Pope, however, explained in 1075 to ‘King of the Rus’ Izyaslav the specific reasons why he did not take the risk of believing this letter. The letter he sent notes that two of his envoys had set out to explain ‘verbally what was in the letter’. There is no possibility here of obedience to the papal throne or a breakaway from the Byzantine patriarchate. However, Gregory VII died in exile, whilst Izyaslav returned to Kyiv in 1077 following the death of his brother, his enemy. The hopes pinned on the West had come to nothing.

What would have happened if the Germans, Hungarians and Poles had installed a puppet on the Golden Throne of Kyiv? For instance, during the brief reign of the Hungarian King Koloman in Galicia, which had been conquered by the Hungarians, the Orthodox bishop was exiled, churches were converted into Catholic places of worship, and the people were forced to adopt the Latin rite. However, Prince Daniil and Mstislav Udaloy recaptured Galicia through a fierce assault, restoring the city’s political and religious freedom. Contact with the Papacy had also proved unsuccessful.

Essentially, Catholic propaganda had failed to take hold among the Slavs for two reasons: the Slavs and Prussians could not understand the Latin Bible; and permission for its translation was not granted. Consequently, it was a matter of forced conversion. The consequences of this forced conversion are perfectly described in the work **History of the Church**, written by Adam of Bremen in 1070: “Had it not been for the intervention of the greedy Saxons, who were more concerned with collecting tithes than with converting the pagans, the Slavic tribes of the Baltic region would certainly have embraced Christianity long ago. The Saxons first drove the newly Christianised people of Slavonia to despair with their greed, then persecuted them until they rebelled. Now, however, they merely collect money and do not even care what anyone believes.”²⁵

Here is the reply to the letter written by Metropolitan John IV to Pope Gregory VII, who heroically defended the just inclinations of the Western Churches but remained powerless against the laws of nature, including ethnogenesis.

The intense tensions in Roman-German Europe in the 12th century,

24 Galkovskiy, N. *The Struggle of Christianity*, Vol. I, p. 97.

25 Gumilevskiy, **History of the Church**, p. 61.

had reached a stagnant phase. Slavic and Greek Europe, however, had expended its accumulated energy and entered a phase of inertia. Its sole activity was to live off its accumulated wealth and traditions. But when that accumulated wealth was exhausted and the traditions forgotten, the fall of Constantinople and the founding of Riga were drawing near.

This decline took a heavier toll on the Russians than on the Slavs and Greeks. For the Slavs and Greeks paid the price of this decline with their lives. The princes of the Rurik dynasty, however, were comfortably preoccupied with their own affairs, laying waste to their lands through fierce internal strife. As for the theological disputes with the Catholics, the Russians, who understood very well that the issue lay not in religious matters but in war, paid no heed to such things. And finally, when a Crusade was declared against the Orthodox in the 13th century, the war began. (See Chapter XXII.)

The Europeans had launched a systematic attack. In 1204, the French and Venetians captured and sacked Constantinople and Thessaloniki; however, they were halted by the Bulgarians and Cumans in 1205. Although the Latin Empire and the 'Overseas Territories' (Palestine) subsequently adopted a defensive stance, they were eventually eliminated by the end of the 13th century.

The Germans and Swedes had laid siege to the wealthy city of Novgorod, but Alexander Nevsky, who engaged them in fierce combat between 1240 and 1242, succeeded in saving the city. Meanwhile, during this half-century, the Mongols who had emerged in Asia had defeated their steppe enemies—such as the Merkits, Cumans and Bulgars—but had not yet penetrated Russian territory. The Mongol army, having merely surveyed the Russian lands, withdrew in 1241. The coincidence of the Catholic persecution of the Orthodox with the Mongol campaign in Mongolia is merely a coincidence.

Russia, divided into eight 'peninsulas'—or rather, sovereign states—was a super-ethnos founded upon traditions that were gradually being forgotten; yet, having lost its allies and surrounded by enemies, it stood utterly alone. As if that were not enough, the majority of the people were also opposed to this system, which was founded on Orthodoxy, the tsarist regime and general Russian nationalism. They were stubborn pagans and hypocritical dualists. They paid their taxes, but they had not the slightest affection for the regime. Without their support, the knazdom could not survive, yet to rely on them was more than just dangerous. The Mongols and the Germans, these

They had found people among them who would assist them. The trouble was that these people did not regard themselves as traitors, believing they had been forced to submit by the princes. Naturally, in such circumstances, the fragmentation of Russian territories in the 14th century was hardly surprising. The Republic of Novgorod fell into the hands of Hanseatic League members who did not possess full rights; the Lithuanians seized the lands of Kyiv with virtually no resistance; whilst the Zaleski region managed to save itself by forming an alliance with the Golden Horde, which protected its subjects. Isolation is the surest path to extinction. This process of ethnic obscuration began not as a result of the Mongol raids, which were later exaggerated in historical accounts, but with the destruction of Kiev 33 years before Batu Khan's campaign.

Could the cause of this obscuration have been, as 19th-century historians eventually realised, a consequence of growing proximity to the West and its culture, which was undergoing a turbulent period of development? To answer this question, it is necessary to take a brief overview of the intellectual climate in Europe during the 12th century. Only in this way can the difference between the Eastern and Western intellectual frameworks—which led to the great fragmentation of the 11th century—be understood.

96. Astonishment

The state of Western Christianity in the 9th century was more robust than that in the East. In the East, all forms of philosophy could be studied without reference to Christianity. In the West, however, reason—that is, personal thought—was emphasised as the means of acquiring knowledge, but generating ideas was by no means an easy task. Even if you could produce a thought, you would then face the even more difficult problem of reconciling it with the views of your neighbour or your community; every such disagreement, in turn, increased the number of enemies. Moreover, a forming thought, even if not sufficiently convincing, had to be connected to every new piece of information. The stories travellers recounted contradicted established knowledge about the shape of the world; myths clashed with the Bible, and the Christian faith clashed with pagan cults. All these were matters to be dismissed; yet the growing passion in the 9th century was driving people to follow the traces of their worldviews, to take steps that had absolutely nothing to do with religious proselytism. This was not madness, but rather a manifestation of the era's passionate tension.

Medieval seekers of God had discovered the secret of life without ever leaving the cities where they were born. For Eastern wisdom had been transported to the West as it stood, and had provided an answer to the most profound theological question: God is the creator of the world and of good; but where, then, did evil and the Devil come from?

The complex theological issues that weighed most heavily upon Christians in the Middle Ages were both incomprehensible and pointless. Yet all Christians—and even those who did not believe in religious dogmas, or indeed even gave those matters a second thought—were compelled to set themselves a limit.

The prevailing view in the world had centred on a single point: the distinction between good and evil, and the explanation of what evil is. The medieval bourgeoisie had resolved this issue quite simply: the opposition between God and the Devil. That is, through elementary dualism. However, theologians and monists who maintained that God is everywhere opposed this view. But since God is everywhere—and indeed even within the Devil—He must therefore bear moral responsibility for all His actions.

People objected to this idea. If God is the source of both good and evil (let us suppose that to be the case), then there was no point in respecting Him. Those who objected cited verses from the New Testament showing that Christ refused to come to terms with Satan, who was trying to tempt him. Monists, however, countered this view with the thesis that Satan had been created as a pure angel, but had created evil due to his pride and arrogance after being cast down. Yet this hypothesis did not align with God's attributes of omniscience and omnipotence, as He must have foreseen the behavioural nuances of the being He created. For although God had the power to eliminate Satan's lawlessness, He had not done so. Faced with this situation, theologians put forward a new view: Satan was obliged to fulfil and complete the task entrusted to him. However, this view essentially implied that God and Satan were in harmony. This view was convincing to those who were not indifferent to religion, but it was unacceptable to sincere believers. It was at this point that heretics emerged, seeking to resolve the issue.

In 847, the priest Gotshalk, building on the views of St Augustine, put forward a thesis on the subject of predestination. According to this, some people

were destined for heaven, whilst others were condemned to hell regardless of their deeds. For God was all-powerful. This view seemed quite logical, but in this scenario, not only would no effort be required to attain heaven, but some people might also commit every conceivable sin, believing they had been condemned to hell by God even before they were created. Consequently, Gottschalk's claim had caused a great stir. The Bishop of Cologne, Raban Maur, confined Gottschalk to a monastery. In 849, a new debate on the subject began. D. Scott Eriugena also joined the polemic, advancing the view that there is no such thing as evil in the world; rather, 'me on' (Greek), that is, the absence of life, is an evil;²⁶ consequently, the question of good and evil has no bearing on theology, and furthermore, this subject is disregarded from both a theoretical and a practical ethical perspective.

Eriugena's view had been condemned at the council convened in Valencia in 855. The council dismissed Eriugena's view as 'Scottish nonsense', deeming it 'not true faith, but the claim of the Devil'.²⁷ Thus, the two variants of evil—the metaphysical (Satanic) and the practical (sin)—were thereby justified. Gottschalk regarded God's providence as the source of evil; Eriugena, however, accepted that since God does not create evil, manifest evil takes the place of good.

At a time when the theoretical question of good and evil had reached an impasse, the Roman Church reverted to the view of Pelagius, who maintained that salvation was possible through good works. This approach was by no means a deliberate deviation on the part of St Augustine, but rather an intuitive perception and instinctive behaviour yielding practical results from a natural ethical perspective. Whilst Pelagius's view satisfied the questions in the minds of the masses, Augustine's view resolved the enigma concerning the emergence and nature of evil and the Devil, as repeatedly mentioned in the New Testament. Yet the minds of young people from various peoples and social strata were troubled by this ambiguity.

These young minds were not seeking the formulas for wealth or social structure in philosophers and theologians; they were simply seeking traditions and that...

²⁶ Arsenyev, I. *From the Time of Charlemagne to the Reformation*, p. 62.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 64–65.

They needed worldviews that would harmoniously combine the level of knowledge of those traditions with their life experiences.

This, too, rarely occurred when broad sections of the population, deeply embroiled in ideological disputes, turned to the masters for answers to the questions that plagued their minds. When an ethnic group chooses a path it will not follow for a long time, without taking the matter as far as collapse or disintegration, such a 'fateful period' can generally last for decades. In this situation, philosophical knowledge garners attention within society, and although not everyone can grasp the complex theological arguments, the consequences are observed by all.

However, such creative periods are always dangerous. For the traces of truth can sometimes cast a person into the very heart of a web woven from lies. In such times, neighbours steeped in culture and ideology allow their own views to take root not amongst a people firmly grounded on solid foundations, but within a body that has reached its full maturity. Ideological metastases sometimes give rise to chimeras dominated by anti-systems that are not always easy to contend with. Such a situation had emerged in the Carolingian Empire in the 9th century and appeared set to bring about serious consequences.

97. Dogmas, Views and the ' ' Events of the 9th–12th Centuries in the West

Official church theology, it would seem, had remained largely silent for a long time, seemingly unable even to know how to object to certain actions of its members. By the end of the 9th century,²⁸ European society—from clergy to ordinary people, from the highest to the lowest—was in a state of complete moral decay. Pope John XII (955–964) had established a harem from the women he had purchased for his castle; he hunted, chased women, drank, and even held feasts in honour of the old gods and the Devil according to pagan customs.²⁹ Classical traditions had not yet been entirely forgotten, but they were of no help. Most of the saints were illiterate; prelates were appointed on the basis of family ties. Religious thought was under the sway of biblical teachings suited to the level of ignorant theologians. Spiritual life was subject to the will of benefactors

²⁸ N. A. Osokin gives the exact date as 891.

²⁹ Veber, *General History*, 6/79–80.

It was organised according to the words spoken by the Klunist monks, who never ventured outside. In this era, all energetic people had devoted themselves either to mysticism or to debauchery.³⁰ The number of energetic and passionate people, however, was greater than desired. Consequently, these individuals could be channelled to Palestine to liberate the holy tomb that had fallen into Muslim hands. However, this time, it was a political, not a religious, campaign.

The dialectical contradiction described here did not apply beyond the borders of the 'Christian World'. Orthodox Greeks, Muslims—Arabs and Berbers—and pagans—Slavs and Balts—had resolved the question of conscience either on the basis of tradition or through moral institutions. They did not resemble Western Europeans, nor did they wish to. Consequently, entirely different conflicts had arisen in the eastern part of Europe. The Manichaean Cathars also came to the West from this region.

The Cathars identified the god of evil—that is, the creator of the world—with Yahweh, the god of the Old Testament, whom they believed to be treacherous, cruel, and deceitful, and who had created the material world to mock humanity.³¹ However, they were immediately confronted with the following question from medieval Christians: 'But what of Christ, who was human?' Two answers had been prepared for this question. One was clear for new converts, the other mysterious for the initiated. According to the clear version, 'Christ was a heavenly reflection and descended upon Mary. He then emerged from her as a substance quite different from the former... He is unlike any other living creature on earth. Although he contained earth, this was so that, in the eyes of men, he might not be placed in a position of suspicion before Satan, who was seeking ways to kill the Saviour by chance.' However, for the faithful (they gave this name to the members of the community – L. G.), they offered another explanation: "Christ is the creation of Satan. He came into the world to deceive people and prevent them from attaining salvation. The true one has not come and lives in a special world, in the 'heavens of Jerusalem'."³²

Enough detail. No; there can be no doubt that Manichaeism in Provence and Lombardy was not merely heresy but also anti-Christianity; it stood apart from Christianity, and indeed from Islam and theistic Buddhism. However, moving from theology to cultural history—

30 Osokin, *The First Inquisition*, I/170–173.

31 Arsenyev, I. *From Charlemagne to the Reformation*, p. 87.

32 Osokin, *The First Inquisition*, Vol. I, pp. 194–195.

If we were to do so, a different outcome would ensue. Whilst God and the Devil were retained in the Manichaeian conception, their roles were reversed. This is why this new propaganda achieved extraordinary success in the 12th century. The conception was exotic, but its details were familiar. For those seeking God, the substitution of 'minus' for 'plus' was a matter of simple common sense. Yet, as a change, any opposing view, any unpleasant yet equally unfamiliar quality could have been introduced. Furthermore, Manichaeian teachings had branched out into many different schools. Different worldviews and conflicting perceptions were always tailored to the degree of passivity of those to be recruited into the community. Propagandists were urged not to fear fire and were permitted to tell lies. Thus, through the lies they employed, the propagandists both saved themselves and dealt fatal blows to their rivals.

In order for their propaganda to be successful, the Cathars frequently changed their appearance. They would enter a town or village sometimes dressed as pilgrims, sometimes as merchants, but most often they appeared as weavers. This was because it was easy for a weaver to find work, and they could establish the necessary connections without attracting attention. This was not a mass anti-feudal class movement, but rather, as has been said, a cover for the members of an organisation united under the rule of the Manichaeian 'priests' living in Bulgaria.

Albigensianism, however, permitted the use of cunning and deceit against the masses in religious matters, yet saw no need for individuals to suffer in order to be convinced on religious grounds. The Cathars would sometimes walk arm in arm with Catholics, and at other times separate from them to cover their tracks. This was because within Catholic institutions, there was a special section that allowed for the separation of nominal Catholics from sincere Catholics.³³

Dualism—or, more accurately, naturophobia—is not harmful to the geographical environment as long as it appeals to people of a considerably high educational standard. Dreamers and thinkers striving to grasp the non-contradictory meaning of life were inviting the reader to a more sincere compassion. For example, in 1022, the priests of the Catholic churches in Orléans—the spiritual King Robert, Queen Constance Stephen, the Scholastic of Lisoy, and the private priests of the Norman nobility, Arephaste and Geribert—the aforementioned Arep-

³³ Ibid., p. 23.

They had fallen victim to the traitor's betrayal. By abusing the trust of the thinkers, this man, who falsely presented himself as a supporter of heresy, denounced them to the king and testified against them in court. We feel sympathy for the victims of a traitor. In the end, the naive dreamers were burned, but this harsh treatment had been condemned by many church leaders. Bishop Vazon of Luttich expressed his reaction to this event as follows: "God does not wish for the sinner to die, but to repent and live. He does not hasten to judge the sinner, but waits patiently. Bishops must take the Saviour as their example. Instead of killing the Rafizis, we must prevent them from mingling with sincere believers, and keep the latter safe from their influence."³⁴

However, these latter groups were unable to survive. Gnosticism drew many French people, Belgian aristocrats and ordinary folk into its ranks. In the 11th century, the moral decline of church members was compounded by a religious tolerance that was certainly not a product of mercy, but rather had become a symbol of indifference and laziness towards religious duties. The prelates' efforts to enlist uneducated and unenterprising individuals as assistants had led many passionate individuals to flock to the orders. The sub-passionate, however, were a heavy burden on the Church. This situation did not bode well.

When a crack appears in the ethnic system under the influence of neighbouring cultures, harmful 'bacteria' seep in through this crack—which resembles an open wound—and naturally hinder healing. This is a general rule. The situation in Europe during the 11th and 12th centuries was no different.

Let us begin with Spain. By 1031, the Umayyad Caliphate—the Jews' main stronghold in the West—had collapsed. The Arab caliphs (*muluk at-tavâif*) who succeeded it were by no means men of the calibre required to fill the void left by the fallen dynasty. The only exception at that time was Granada, known as the 'Jewish city'³⁵, and the Jews had fled from other Muslim rulers to seek refuge in Castile. The Jews were well received here. This was because, as the Reconquista had begun, the Spaniards were compelled both to fill the ranks of their army and to increase the population of the cities. The Jews were granted numerous privileges, including the right to live in a ghetto. This was quite significant

³⁴ Arsenyev, I. *From Charlemagne to the Reformation*, p. 77.

³⁵ Müller, *History of Islam*, IV/167.

development. For in the districts granted ghetto rights, the laws of the kingdom did not apply. The Jews living in these ghettos were judged according to their own religious laws. According to Jewish courts, Jews who committed crimes against Christians or engaged in heretical propaganda contrary to Christian beliefs enjoyed immunity.

King Louis VII of France and King Philip Augustus of Castile followed their example. They were followed by the kings of Aragon, England and Sicily, as well as other monarchs. Essentially, society at that time was, on the whole, 'not hostile to Christianity, but rather sceptical and indifferent'.³⁶ Those who opposed the ruling powers were primarily free peasants, village clergy and minor feudal lords; yet even they were under the control of the heretics, who, with the support of their representatives from the kings, had moved from words to deeds by the 12th century.

Cathar and Patarin teachings had developed unhindered from the 10th century through to the 13th century. In Italy, where the feudal lords were in exile, the Patarines had managed to establish themselves in the cities. By 1163, the number of Patarines in Milan exceeded that of the Catholics, and their activities were more vigorous. Indeed, during a propaganda campaign, even an archbishop was killed. By 1184, the city of Verona was entirely Patarine. Indeed, Pope Lutschai II, who had been sent into exile, was unable to enter the city, whilst the city of Spoleto had fallen into the hands of Catholics chanting the slogan 'Death to the Patarines and the Ghibellines!'³⁷ The Patarines fled from cities where such slogans were shouted, making their way to France or Toulouse. This was because the most important positions at the court of the Dukes of Toulouse were held by Jews who supported the Cathars.³⁸ It should not be forgotten that in the 12th century, the nobles of Languedoc and Provence were the descendants of the great landowners who had purchased latifundia in the 9th and 10th centuries—that is, the descendants of the wealthy Jewish slave traders, the Rahdânîs, who had once converted to Catholicism. These nobles, descendants of merchants, had, upon converting, presented themselves as weavers and had become quite active. In the 'Annals' of Baronnie from 1183, we find the following lines regarding the 'Koteller' operating in France: 'They burned the temples, captured the saints and respected people, took them away and tortured them. Whilst torturing them, they mocked them, shouting 'Drink! Drink! You whores!' This was followed by slaps and blows from thick sticks

36 Arsenyev, I. *From the Time of Charlemagne to the Reformation*, pp. 144–145.

37 Osokin, *The First Inquisition*, Vol. I, pp. 175–178.

38 Schipper, *The Origins of Capitalism*, pp. 175–178.

‘The same “heretics” plundered the churches; in a fit of rage, they hurled the Lord’s body, fashioned from golden vessels, to the ground and trampled this sacred object underfoot.’³⁹ Essentially, these notes describe the incubation period of the Albigensian Wars, which had begun long before the Crusades against the Rafizis were declared. And, of course, as is always the case, an investigation into the culprits who provoked the war will yield no results.

As can be seen, Western Europe in the 11th–12th centuries was less monolithic in cultural, religious and political terms than it was in the 19th century. There is nothing surprising about this. For the development of civilisations is a process of levelling, akin to the calm Procrustean bed experienced in Ancient Greece. This process can span up to 1,200 years in terms of population. Thus, if we go back 800 years from the present day, the mosaic nature of medieval Europe will be readily apparent. This was the ‘age of lawlessness and anarchy’.⁴⁰

Here is the answer to the question posed above. To join the West, a definitive answer had to be given to the question ‘to whom?’. To the Albigensians of Toulouse? To the Pope of Rome and his allies, known at the time as the Welfs (the Guelfs in Italy)? To the emperor who had amassed his plundered wealth at the castle of Triphelce? Furthermore, whatever the choice, provincial cities such as Paris, London, Toledo and Barcelona were not to be taken into account.

The so-called ‘contact’ had to be reciprocal. Could one have gone to the Pope and said: ‘Renounce your claim to authority over all independent churches; in exchange for money, relinquish the right to absolve sins and grant pardons; surrender ownership of the rich lands’? The Pope’s supporters were ruthless towards the Greeks and the Polabian Slavs, the Lutici. It was better to die than to make contact with them! But half of Europe was like that!

And what of the German emperors of the Franconian and Swabian dynasties and their supporters, the Ghibellines? These capable yet ruthless commanders relied on merciless adventurers, whose wages were paid for with Jewish money gathered from the wealthy ghettos in the cities along the Rhine. Their rule was founded solely on force and, to a lesser extent, diplomacy. With the Rafizis, more so than with the papalists—

³⁹ Arsenyev, I. *From Charlemagne to the Reformation*, p. 103.

⁴⁰ Veber, *General History*, IV/383.

; the treachery and cunning displayed by Henry VI during the conquest of Sicily had reduced the German people's reputation to nothing in the eyes of the Italians and the French. The Teutonic Order, which had seized Prussia and threatened to 'send its vanguard units to attack the East', had been established directly by the imperial factions, just as the Templars had been founded by the papacy. I cannot bring myself to say which of these was worse for their neighbours.

There is really nothing to be said about the Albigenses. Their aim was to do away with the 'evil world'. Christians and pagans, on the other hand, wanted both to preserve and to beautify the world. Consequently, propaganda of a negative nature could have succeeded not among the Russians at that time, but amongst the Bulgarians.

98. Cruelty

The acute phase of ethnogenesis, or, to put it another way, the system's excessive, passionate fervour, is a period that is more severe and tragic for the neighbours than for those within the super-ethnos itself. It is understandable that knights and armoured warriors should throw themselves into wars of conquest in the name of heroism; yet the thinkers too—scholastics and heretics—pursue the same aim. The only difference is that they have confused political aggression with intellectualism. It is difficult to say whether life was harsher for the enslaved Slavs and Celts, or for the Greeks who lost their property, their freedom, or suffered spiritual torment. Consequently, they were resisting with all their might. Conquering Ireland was only achieved by Henry VII in the 15th century; Byzantium, which had preferred the sultan's turban to the pope's mitre, had managed to hold out until then. The Russian cultural tradition, however, had managed to survive despite internal collapse and the renewal of the ethnic group. But how and why? This subject will be examined in detail below.

However, the Roman-Germanic super-ethnos's attempt to seize world domination by eliminating all ethnos groups that failed to defend themselves had proved ineffective against those that managed to survive. The entire thousand-year history of Russian-European contact (in an ethnological sense) consists of the infiltration of 'civilisations'⁴¹ into 'cultures'. This,

41 What is meant by this term in the 20th century is the mechanical (not merely technical) sense that does not shape the ethnopyschological mindset.

In a political sense, it was an attempt to seize the lands inhabited by the Russians. On an ideological level, it was the dissemination of views, ideas, values, tastes—in short, of the mindset. This dissemination was not always successful. For the West's assault was not a stable, planned, or uncompromising attack.

The reader should not hold it against the author that he does not follow a chronological order. Towards the end of the 17th century, whilst the pro-Western policy pursued by the Romanov dynasty was reaching its zenith in Russia, fierce conflicts arose between Peter—who had come under the influence of Protestant Holland—and Sofia and Golitsyn, who were under the sway of Catholic Europe, namely Austria and Poland.

However, neither side achieved anything. Golitsyn, who had entered the service of Austria, was defeated at Perekop, whilst Peter, the former ally of Protestant Saxony, suffered a defeat at Narva; for this reason, the war lasted not two or three years, but a full 21 years.

The seven-year war launched by Russia in alliance with France and Austria came to an end with the death of Elizabeth Petrovna. The 180-degree turn under Peter III had swept away all the fruits of the Russian army's victory. Naturally, in the end, the intellectual descendants of the medieval 'weavers' and 'sengers' would capitalise on this situation. There is no room here for a detailed analysis of the consequences of this super-ethnic encounter; yet the fact that the dynasty was thus free to make such an arbitrary political choice is a tragic event.

No; Grand Duchess Olga, Yuri II and Alexander Nevsky, who expelled the German missionaries from Russian territory to avoid a fruitless debate, were not fools. So, were relations with the Muslim and steppe-dwelling East in the 12th century constructive? Let us not be too quick to judge.

99. The Parting of Ways with the Islamic World

Despite all the discord described above, whilst the Christian West managed to preserve its opportunities for development, the Muslim East, in the same situation, had lost these opportunities. This was because, by the end of the 11th century, the Muslim East had become an ethnic chimera. The Abbasid Caliphate had rid itself of its internal Rafidites through the foreign Turkmen-Seljuks who had revived and re-established Sunni Islam in the territories they had conquered—Iran, Syria, Mesopotamia and Asia Minor

, had rid itself of the Rafidites within its own ranks through the foreign Turkmen Seljuks, who revived and established Sunni Islam.

But this enlightened period was not to last long. The Seljuk Sultanate disintegrated, first due to civil wars in the west and then in Iran; the Turks scattered among the Arabs and Persians had not assimilated with them to form a single ethnic group. Consequently, the Islamic world of the 12th century must be viewed as a chimeric unity. The populace had been united not by complementary systemic bonds, but by brute force. Power had fallen into the hands of the Mamluks, who were of Turkish origin but had been severed from the Turkish steppe world. It goes without saying that the power of Islamic proselytism had dwindled to nothing. Becoming a Muslim, it seemed, was no longer attractive to the nomads. Consequently, the Muslims were forced to retreat in the face of the Kipchaks and Oghuz Turks. The Kara-Khitans (Kitan) had seized the region between the two rivers in Central Asia; the Georgians had won a series of successful victories against the Seljuk emirs. The breaking point—that is, the decline in the system's intense level of tension—had led the Islamic world, by the 13th century, into the obscure phase of its twilight years, with no clear path forward.

Even more surprising was that, at a time when nomadic Turks, Orthodox Greeks, Georgians and Russians were rejecting Islamic culture, the Crusaders—who were, in essence, the most implacable enemies of Islam—adopted this culture with utter greed. The ethnological explanation for this event is straightforward. Byzantine culture had crystallised and required no changes. This is a characteristic of the inertia phase of ethnogenesis. The nomads, descendants and heirs of the Huns, had long since lost their creative power and their energetic, capable people. The ethnic groups had aged, that is, they had reached the homeostasis phase. At this stage, people are conservative and opposed to any form of innovation. Escaping this situation is only possible through a new impetus of passion. The emergence of the Mongols in the 13th century served this function. The French, Italians and Spaniards were in the dynamic phase, that is, a period of constant, intense passion. This situation endowed them with a flexible structure and drove them not only to acquire war booty but also to adopt knowledge, skills and philosophical views. The West had lost the war in Palestine, but had enriched its spiritual culture, broadened its horizons and emerged from the war with a substantial gain.

The nomads, however, who had defeated both Muslims and Christians, were unable to comprehend a high culture in the 13th century. Indeed, they had no—

They had no such needs either. For they had a natural worldview that served as a substitute for religion. This worldview certainly cannot be called atheism. On the contrary, the term that best fits it is demonology; but that too requires explanation.

100. Demonology

The level of religious consciousness—the cult—is directly proportional to the level of passionate tension within the ethnic system. For an original worldview to be created, not only a doctrine but also the capacity to comprehend it is required. This is not found in every member of an ethnic group. Nevertheless, the passionate elite who grasp this or that doctrine both reflect it in their own behavioural patterns and begin to instil it in the bourgeoisie, who adopt a doctrine without subjecting it to critical scrutiny. This applies both to settled peoples who can read and write, and to nomadic peoples who transmit valuable knowledge by word of mouth, perhaps even more effectively through memorisation.

At the end of the akmatic phase (at the onset of the rupture), the interest felt by ordinary people—that is, the weak passioners—in complex worldviews wanes, and eventually all that remains is a set of views which, from the bourgeois point of view, embody practical knowledge. Theology turns into natural philosophy, and religion into demonology. For every normal person living in the forest fears encountering the forest giant or the water nymph; those of the steppe, the nightmare and the albast.

These are the spirits of nature that cannot be subdued by mankind, but even more fearsome are the spirits of the dead. The Russians call them 'rusalka', whilst the Turks call them 'ubur' (upır). They feed on the blood of those who were close to the deceased whilst they were alive. Since many people have seen these monstrosities or heard tales of them, and have been unable to escape death despite spells or the sudden intervention of neighbours, there can be no doubt that these are disease-spreading creatures that sometimes cause heart attacks, sometimes anaemia, and sometimes paralysis. Indeed, we have ceased to doubt the existence of viruses, which can be seen not with the naked eye but only on a screen via an electron microscope.

Naturally, knowing of the existence of many harmful organisms has also brought with it the need to find ways to protect ourselves against them. El-

Of course, these methods were not things known to ordinary hunters and herdsmen. To fight the invisible enemy—the Demons—specialists were required. In Turkish, these were called ‘bahşı’, and in Russian, ‘znahari’. In modern academic terminology, they are referred to as ‘shamans’. The latter is actually present among the Tungus-Manchus, but its meaning is different. The term ‘shamanism’, whether derived from Indian origins or from the Buryat ‘black religion’⁴²—a form of polytheism—is a complex system of mystical atheism. It has no connection with the worldviews of the Western Siberian Turks and the Ugrians. Even polytheism, with its many forms, is more than mere theism. However, as this topic would divert us from our main theme, we shall leave it aside.

More importantly, these peoples had their own religions in ancient times. This religion is sometimes an original form of dualism, based not on antagonism but on a synthesis in which one complements the other’s deficiencies. At other times, it was borrowed from religious propagandists. For example, Hörmüst, bestowed upon the Uighurs by the Manichaeans; Mithra, which passed from the Saka to the Mongols; and Üç Iduk, the legacy of the Nestorians.⁴³ However, these cults were of interest to the steppe peoples during a period when they were transitioning from the dynamic phase to the inertial phase. During the creative homeostasis period, however, those seeking a religion turned either to Christianity, Islam, or—as in the eastern parts of the steppe—to Buddhism and the Bhon religion. In the 10th–12th centuries, Turkic culture, much like its states, had begun to deteriorate, and the direct cause of this was ethnic entropy—that is, the natural erosion of passion.

However, this collapse has nothing to do with demonology. For a person in a state of homeostasis, the uncomplicated theories of theologians and philosophers are important; but even if they understand what is happening around them, it is not scientific to them. A reasonable deviation within the rules is not an error for him; on the contrary, what interests him most is the removal of meaningless obstacles. Consequently, even things that have become intermingled with the forgotten knowledge of the past are, in his view, quite solid.

The regional nature of the demonological system is also a highly significant matter. For example, the terrifying demons of the interior regions of the Eurasian continent are unknown in England. Yet there, too, there are ‘little people’ such as witches and goblins who fly on broomsticks on nights of the full moon;

42 Banzarov D. *Black Faith*. St Petersburg, 1891; Gumilev L. N. *Ancient Mongolian Religion*//Proceedings of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR. Vol. 5, L., 1968, pp. 31–39.

43 Gumilev L. N. *Nestorianism and Ancient Rus* // Proceedings of the ‘Ethnographic Geographical Society of the USSR. L., 1967, p. 8.

However, the spirits of the slain do not suck blood; they merely frighten those who dwell in old castles. According to ancient mythological beliefs, the Scandinavians fear the ifrits who defeated the Valgal gods. According to the Chinese, demons are divided into five groups: Yao – a ghost; mo – a formless evil force; hui – the spirit of the deceased; huai – the spirit of evil; and sheng – a kind of Olympian god. There are also variations at the two ends of the continent: foxes in China, and wolves in Germany.

It is clear from this that demonology has no connection with either theology or philosophy. Consequently, it cannot be propagated among ethnic groups living in different landscapes. Furthermore, it plays no role in interactions between ethnic groups. Demonological beliefs can only spread through the migrations of indigenous peoples capable of adapting to a new environment.

XVI. GOLDEN AUTUMN

101. A Step Forward

Vladimir Monomakh and Grand Prince Mstislav, whilst safeguarding the interests of their own lands, also coordinated the policies of neighbouring principalities. However, from 1132 onwards, the signs of a gradual decline began to appear. The proclamation of Vsevolod Olgovich as Prince of Kiev effectively meant that Novgorod had broken away from Russia to become a constituent part of an independent state. Naturally, this situation would lead to violent conflicts whilst also paving the way for the principality to play a greater role in European politics. Russian territories had begun, little by little, to lose their independence. This loss had begun, at first, with the formation of political alliances for the sake of foreign interests, and had subsequently turned into a total loss. The process of decline had made itself felt, albeit slowly, but inevitably.

Uneven development and diverse elements, including ethnic ones, give rise to the absolute prerequisites for the consolidation of any system. Consequently, multi-ethnicity and affiliation with diverse formations did not undermine the super-ethnic unity of the old Rus, but rather strengthened it; indeed, this theme is beautifully explored in the ‘Epic of the Ruin of the Rus Lands’, composed in the 13th century.¹ However, by the mid-13th century, everything would change. The events that occurred in the second quarter of the 13th century were interpreted by the people of that era as “ruin”. Why?

In the 11th and 12th centuries, the internal conflicts between principalities, whilst painful, were a form of ‘disease’ that did not threaten the people’s lives—

1 Begunov, Yu. K. *Monuments of 13th-Century Russian Literature*. Moscow–Leningrad, 1965, pp. 154–155, 182–184.

We must regard this as a period of 'development'. However, conflicts with other super-ethnic systems have led to more serious consequences. At the beginning of the 13th century, Western interference in Russian affairs was generally limited to the formation of military alliances. Poland and Hungary were part of the Guelph bloc, whilst Volhynia sided with the Ghibellines, and, moreover, at a time when Prince Roman had been killed in battle in 1205, his rivals, the Chernigov and Suzdal factions, had made contact with the Pope and supported Novgorod in its war against the Livonian Order, which was aligned with the Hohenstaufen. Seeking to capitalise on the opportunity, the Pope sent Dominican missionaries to Russia; however, Yuri II, believing that no benefit would come from these allies, expelled them from the principality's borders.

At this stage of ethnogenesis, people always believe they have reached happy days and are approaching the pinnacle of development. People in the nineteenth century called this 'progress'. To a certain extent, this was true. If by 'progress' one means keeping pace with the course of time, it must be understood that after the crimson of dusk, a bluish darkness descends, followed by the pitch-black darkness of night. Yet this final stage, likely for emotional reasons, escapes the notice of contemporaries. The ancient Russians were no exception in this regard. Just as the Romans regarded the days of Caracalla, the Byzantines those of Isaac Angelos, the Chinese the Southern Song dynasty, and the ancient Persians the Achaemenid Empire as the happiest moments of their lives, so too did the Russians believe that the idyllic state of the Russian lands—which required no effort from its inhabitants to enjoy these blessings—would endure until the end of time.

How could they have so easily forgotten the catastrophic defeat suffered by Kiev in 1203, the trampling of the Ryazan lands—which Grand Prince Vsevolod had reduced to a wasteland in 1208—and the annihilation of the nine-thousand-strong elite army on the banks of the Lipitsa River! In their view, all these were matters of the past that should not be recalled, lest they turn one's stomach. Life had become pleasant and easy. Most importantly, there was freedom. For no one was threatening Russia. Thus, one could simply enjoy life without having to worry about the fate of the ancestral homeland. However, these blissful days were to last twenty years. Then, in 1222, the princes of Ryazan, who had rushed to the aid of their Polovtsian allies to rout the Seljuk forces in Crimea, suffered a crushing defeat. The easing of the passionate tensions within an ethnic system is, of course, no blessing; an-

Indeed, provided there are sufficient material resources and an abundance of natural resources, it is possible to sustain the country's development and ensure the survival of its people for a very long time. Indeed, in Byzantium, which was surrounded on three sides by enemies, the Komnenos dynasty managed to hold out for a full century. However, there was a situation of considerable importance for the final phase of ethnogenesis: the presence of Orthodoxy, which had been purged of heretics and the remnants of ancient cultures, had undergone the necessary corrections, and had been transformed into a harmonious spiritual culture. It is for this reason that the Byzantine walls withstood the fierce attacks from the Seljuks in the east, the Normans in the west, and the Pechenegs and Hungarians in the north, and managed to survive.

Byzantine culture had triumphed in Russia and taken centre stage; yet it had failed to take root among the masses. Indeed, even the princes and boyars themselves had not forgotten their own folk beliefs and the faith of their childhood. Old Russian culture was magnificent, yet fragile. Russia's surroundings, meanwhile, were encircled by foreign and hostile beliefs. In short, by the 12th century, a crisis of passion and a crisis of worldview had simultaneously engulfed Russia. The passion of the nation can be likened to a ship's engine, and its culture to the rudder. A ship, however, needs both.

Most importantly, it was the emergence of polarisation within the Slavic world and its division into two parts. The Western Slavs had assimilated into the European 'Christian world'; the southerners had come under Byzantine rule; whilst the easterners had incorporated various ethnic groups from the Carpathians to the Volga and assimilated with them; Orthodoxy had become the second centre of this dual faith, binding together the various peoples within a super-ethnic system whose culture still inspires admiration.

As can be seen, Slavic identity, as a result of the fragmentation of the ethnic sphere, has vanished as an ethno-historical unity, leaving behind a Slavic-speaking legacy and memories of the past for subsequent generations. By the 12th century, the Russian lands had transformed into a super-ethnos in which the Slavic element constituted, if not the entirety, then at least the driving force.

102. In the Red Horizon of Dusk

Old Slavic Rus and Byzantium were contemporaries because they were the products of the same passionate impulse. They lived in different geographical regions. Their neighbours were different, and their economic foundations varied. But within reasonable limits—

The stages of ethnogenesis unfolding within these boundaries occurred simultaneously. During the first third of the 12th century, Vladimir Monomakh and his son Mstislav the Great, just like Alexios and John Komnenos, resolved all the political problems facing the Kievan state. Paganism had come to an end among the Vyatichi along the Oka River, as well as among the Polovtsians along the Don and Dniester; Polotsk had been united with Kyiv. As the final battles along the Lower Danube had resulted in alternating defeats, it was deemed appropriate to make peace with Byzantium. For it had become clear that gaining friends rather than enemies was far more advantageous. The magnificent culture revived by the Komnenos dynasty in Byzantium was flowing into Russia in surging waves. This culture was readily adopted and had proven that Kyiv was a cultural colony of Constantinople. But matters had become thoroughly complicated.

Political successes were not the result of the fervour bubbling and boiling over in Kyiv; on the contrary, they were the consequence of the waning of that fervour in the smaller towns, which had absorbed—if not all, then at least a large part—of Kyiv's youthful energy like a sponge. It was inevitable that such an entropic process, bringing the energy levels of the capital and the provinces closer together, would lead to the loss of the capital's power. The disappearance of the reasons necessitating the country's unity meant that, even if ethnic and ideological unity were maintained, the collapse of the political system in the future was not far off. From a social perspective, this process is termed 'feudal fragmentation', but the same phenomenon was present in both the slave and capitalist systems. The ageing of systems is a natural phenomenon, and there is no escape from it. An ethnos is a system, just like an organism or a star in the sky, and is subject to the laws of nature. Some more complex cultural problems are anthropogenic phenomena. We shall spare no effort in shedding light on this issue.

It must be acknowledged that the Byzantine culture adopted alongside Christianity ran counter to the 'primitive and anarchic structure of the Slavic tribes that existed before the dawn of history'.²

Indeed, P. Muratoff would write the following lines in 1923: "We assumed the historical role of pupils amongst a series of peoples. As pupils of civilisation, we adopted Christianity and Europe's industrial elements—

2 Gushchin A.S. *Monuments of the Artistic Crafts of Ancient Rus' X–XIII*. vv. M., L., 1936, p. 11. However, A. S. Guşçin himself does not share this view.

we are now attempting to grasp social materialism (! – L.G.). Two distinct histories of Russian art are the result of two flaws in our apprenticeship: the former stemming from Byzantium, the latter from 18th-century Europe ... Old Russia and New Russia, respectively, adopted the foreign art of their respective eras. One of these had reached its highest level of development (from the Komnenos Byzantium), whilst the other was already beginning to decline (from 18th-century Europe). Consequently, Russian art history has never encountered the influence of archaic art—that is to say, art that shapes its own structure and sphere of influence. Neither Old Russia nor New Russia contributed to the formation of any artistic tradition; nor did either, despite existing as great states formed outside their own traditions, play a role in their development.”

Here, the discussion centres on the question of whether, at the beginning of the 20th century, it was possible to speak not of ‘art in Russia’ in general, but rather of a distinct ‘Russian art’. According to the above view, the art that developed in Russia was merely a form borrowed from the art of foreign peoples, which underwent slight modifications through local traditions.³ ... Be that as it may, it is not culture but ethnicity that concerns us.

...

The phases of Byzantine and Slavic ethnogenesis were concurrent, yet the destinies of the two ethnic groups diverged. Byzantium was a powerful state capable of withstanding assaults from the east, north and west, and of preserving its core territory in Anatolia and Thrace. Consequently, by the 13th century, its cultural values had developed, whilst its population had only been enriched by incorporating Slavic, Armenian, Georgian and Gothic elements. In other words, Byzantium is a typical example of an orthogen whose development remained unspoilt. The fate of the Eastern Slavs, however, as we have seen, was far from enviable. Although the decline of both ethnic groups began at the same time, the Greeks were able to share their rich culture and aesthetic values with the energetic, powerful and brave Eastern Slavs—who had succeeded in uniting the Finns and the Upper Volga Ugrians within their ethnic composition—the descendants of the Rus’ (the Russians), the Eastern Balts (the Golats), the Finns and the Upper Volga Ugrians.

3 Nikolskiy, V. *History of Russian Art*. Berlin, 1923. For a similar view, see Buslayev, F. I. *Comparative Perspectives on the History of Art in Russia and the West*. Vol. I, St Petersburg, 1880, pp. 3–41; Novitsky, A. P. *History of Russian Art in Ancient Rus’*. Moscow, 1924; Sychev, N. P. *Art of Medieval Rus’//History of All Times and Peoples*. Vol. 4. L., 1929.

103. Where Hope Ends, Sorrow Begins

The period initiated by Vladimir Monomakh's will and endeavour is regarded as the flourishing era of ancient Russian culture. There are many reasons for this. However, during the inertia phase of ethnogenesis, once the accumulated wealth provided comfort and luxury, a period began in which losses took the place of luxury. But if what is spent is not replaced, can a mountain withstand the weight of the ready-made?

Ethnic history shows that such idyllic periods do not last long. This is because, in the lives of people who cannot—or do not wish to—see the future, psychological desires take centre stage. Despite exceptionally favourable conditions, the fate that befell all ethnic groups also befell the Russians.

Kyiv's final success was the capture of Polotsk in 1127. Mstislav the Great, son of Monomakh, had seized the princes of Polotsk and sent them to Byzantium. However, the princes would return in 1132 and Polotsk would regain its freedom. Following Polotsk, Novgorod broke away from Kyiv, whilst the lands of Rostov-Suzdal also gained their independence. In 1139, Vsevolod Olgovich of Seversk drove out the Monomakhs and seized Kyiv. From 1146 onwards, a fierce struggle for Kiev began between the Suzdalians and the Polovtsians on one side, and the Volhynian, Ugrian and Polish forces on the other; meanwhile, Galicia had gained its independence. The people of Kyiv hated the Suzdalians for poisoning the legitimate heir, Prince Yuri Dolgoruky. For this reason, Yuri's son Andrei had granted his warriors permission to plunder Kyiv from top to bottom in 1169. All these events demonstrate that the unity of Russia had been shattered. Russia had evolved from an ethnos into a super-ethnos and, just like Western Europe, had become politically fragmented.

Nevertheless, whilst conflicts between certain principalities—or simply between princes—continued, no one doubted the territorial integrity of the Russian lands. However, by the early 13th century, these wars had taken on a new form, becoming conflicts between ethnic groups. Yet this situation was not a consequence of the strengthening of the provinces, but rather the result of the weakening of the centre, which had been expending the passionate energy accumulated in Kiev during the reigns of Vladimir and Yaroslav.

Russia was no longer a khanate.⁴ For, in the process of ethnic disintegration, it had transformed from a legitimate and monolithic state into a confederation comprising eight 'semi-states' in which Byzantine culture had, to a greater or lesser extent, suppressed pagan Slavic traditions—even the Volkhv's custom of sacrificing humans and animals to the god of darkness.⁶ It is not worth shedding tears over such losses of tradition, but the rivalry between the Monomakhs and the Olgovichs also stemmed from ancient traditions. At the heart of the matter lay not the character of the princes, but the spiritual structure of the ethnic group. The Davydovychs (the children of Davyd Svyatoslavych) had betrayed the Olgovichs; yet the latter, apparently, had managed to hold on because the Chernigovians did not want the Monomakhs. Even so, what was at stake was not merely a feudal war, but also the rivalry between two sub-ethnic groups: the people of Kyiv-Volyn and those of Chernigov-Seversk. Moreover, at the root of both lay distinct ethnic substrates—that is, the former tribes that had been forcibly incorporated into the Old Russian ethnic body by the Kyiv princes, and which now yearned for independence.

It is, of course, nonsense to equate the Kievan Rus' of the 11th–12th centuries with the Polans, and the Chernigovans with the Severians; however, as a result of the ethnic integration of the tribes—that is, the single Old Russian ethnos—sub-ethnoses emerged that retained their earlier characteristics whilst adopting regional names in place of the ethnic groups that had disappeared. Let us suppose that the Suzdalians originated from the Krivichs, Merya and Muromians; the Novgorodians from the Krivichs, Ves and Slovenes; the Ryazanians from the Vyatichs and Muromians; and the Polotskians from the Krivichs, Livonians and Latvians. Yet even these new ethnic groups, having lost their ancestors' traditions, supported the greater ethnic system—the Russians.

There is a whiff of contradiction here, but it is worth pondering. Constant interference in one another's affairs leaves no room for indifference, yet the latter leads to alienation. Indeed, at that time, there could be no question of constantly influencing one another without waging war.

4 The last khan was Prince Oleg Svyatoslavich. He is also mentioned as such in the 'Tale of Igor's Campaign'. His contemporary and rival, Vladimir Monomakh, had adopted the title of tsar—derived from the epithet used by the Byzantine Emperor Constantine IX—only in name.

5 PL. H. 2 . p. 117.

6 See Nosonov, A. N., *"Ruskaya zemlya" and the Formation of the Territory of the Old Russian State*. Moscow, 1951.

Isolated ethnic groups supported their own ethnicity—or, in this context, their ‘super-ethnicity’. This was because the concept of the ‘Russian Lands’ encompassed the Ugric, Finno-Ugric, Baltic (Golad) and Turkic tribes, which were components of this super-ethnic unity. For instance, forming an alliance with the Torki was a tradition followed by the princes of Kyiv and Volhynia, whilst forming an alliance with the Polovtsians was a tradition followed by the princes of Chernigov. The latter were judged not by the chronicler, but by the poet-author of the ‘Tale of Igor’s Campaign’. This author bestowed the name Gorislavič (the Tormentor) upon Oleg Svyatoslavich and laid the blame for Russia’s defeat upon him. It is likely that this view stemmed from a particular bias.⁷

It should be noted that in the second half of the 12th century, whilst the traditional enmity between the Monomakhs and the Olgovichs receded into the background, the isolated Principality of Polotsk—despite being ruled by the descendants of Rognyeda and his son Izyaslav, who did not belong to the ‘Yaroslav’ dynasty—remained almost entirely uninvolved in the ‘feudal wars’. Had it suited the self-serving princes, they would naturally have intervened in the internal strife between their rivals. However, it is quite evident that the Polotsk princes had no close ties with their own subjects.

The same process was unfolding in other regions and cities. The Olgovichs’ attempt to seize Kyiv in 1135 ended in disaster in 1146 due to the Kyivans’ protests of “We don’t want the Olgovichs!”; Igor was brutally murdered, and this marked the beginning of a half-century-long war that culminated in the victory of the Chernigovians. The Chernigovians had captured Kyiv twice and razed it to the ground.

104. The Cause of Grief is Distrust

In parallel with the fragmentation of Slavic unity in Russia, the new Slavic sub-ethnic groups began to draw closer to foreign tribes. Of course, this was not assimilation, but friendship; yet at times it proved even more beneficial than assimilation.

The Novgorodians acted in concert with the ‘Carel’, Ijor and Ves (Veps) against the Swedes; the Polotskans, meanwhile, became friends with the warrior Vod people—

⁷ Gumilev, *In the Footsteps of the Imaginary Kingdom*.

They had. The Merya and Murom tribes had swelled the ranks of the Suzdal princes; the Golad, a Baltic tribe living in the vicinity of Mojaysk and Gjatsk, who had been subjugated by Yaroslav, had assimilated into the Rus' people.

As can be seen, the Russians lived perfectly side by side with indigenous tribes that were certainly Slavic but by no means Orthodox. Ethnic contact occurs in two ways:

1- The coexistence of two or more ethnic groups living on their own lands and integrating with the local community that intervenes in their lives. This is generally beneficial for both sides (symbiosis).

2- Encounter with migrants. It is sufficient for there to be a homeland with a suitable natural environment for migrants and a people living within those natural conditions. However, such contact is almost always self-serving and opportunistic. The Old Russians, however, disliked both and consequently harboured sympathy for the Monomakhs in Kiev and the Olgovichs in Seversk.

By the 12th century, the 'pro-Westerners', having lost their popularity among the broader masses, failed to secure support from the Catholic 'Christian World' either. Russia was protected from the Germans' 'eastern advance' by a barrier formed by the Polabian Slavs, the Prussians and the Estonians. The attacks by the Poles were repelled by the Yatvags, who had adopted the Latin faith in 965; the Swedish incursions by the Carelians; and the attacks from the East by the Polovtsians, who, whilst no less aggressive themselves, were entirely foreign to the region. It was also these Polovtsians who prevented the Khorezmians—who had adopted Islam and occupied Khazaria between 977 and 985—from approaching the borders of the reigns of Vladimir and Yaroslav.

When there is a lack of sufficient energy, indifference begins to set in towards everything—and, naturally, towards historical traditions above all. Even preserving these traditions or simply showing them care is deemed trivial and unnecessary. In such circumstances, a uniform and docile blandness emerges in place of magnificent ethno-cultural types. Indeed, in place of the ethnic mosaics of the 9th century,

by the end of the 12th century, an ethnic unity had taken shape comprising scattered remnants—indifferent to politics, having lost their passion, lacking a permanent presence, and scattered here and there. Indeed, from 1113 onwards, all foreign policy issues were resolved with a surprising lack of rigour. Vladimir Monomakh, following two years of intense warfare,

, brought the Polovtsian encampments stretching as far as the Black Sea and the Don under his control; he also concluded a treaty of vassalage with the nomads beyond the Don. The Vyatichi were conquered, Polotsk annexed; the Yatvag warriors, a headache that had worn out both the Poles and the Russians, were defeated and dispersed in such a way as to pose no threat at the borders.

The country's economy had developed, culture and literacy had become widespread, and the stone towers of sacred temples and churches had begun to dominate the cityscapes; the villages, though not particularly luxurious, had begun to settle along the banks of rivers and lakes. 'After all that hardship, better days'—that is, the golden autumn of civilisation—the age of splendour had begun, founded by the Old Russian people who had heroically resisted terrible hardships.

There is nothing surprising in the fact that rainy days followed the golden autumn, nor that the silence of the evening was succeeded by the ethnic group's dark period. At first glance, in such times of calamity, there is a profound meaning inherent in all natural processes, even if they do not serve as a cause for good or evil. For it is absurd to judge or praise nature, which neither does good nor evil.

The meaning of the event is therefore simple: those who burn easily are consumed by the flames; those who do not catch fire quickly remain at the edges of the hearth as embers and ashes. In the 13th century, a period of obscurity—the 'disease of old age' afflicting every ethnic group—began. And it was only a new, passionate impulse that emerged in the 14th century that prevented the severing of the cultural traditions inherited from Byzantium. However, for this passionate outburst to lead to a long-lasting fire, the presence of 'combustible materials'—that is, healthy and diverse peoples—is essential. Fortunately, such a combustible material remained by the hearth. This was the remnant of the Slavic tribes that had preserved their own way of life in the 12th century.⁸

Why did the chronicler write in 1132 that "all the lands of Rus' were scattered..."? After the death of Mstislav the Great, all the Rus' principalities had broken away from the rule of Kyiv. This situation in no way

8 In 1146, the Vyatich cities are mentioned. (See Soloviev, *Istoriya Rossii*, Vol. I, Part II, p. 434). The southern Drevgovich lands, however, were wrested from the hands of Izyaslav Davydovich by Yuri Dolgoruky in 1149. (See *ibid.*, p. 447). The foundation of the modern Ukrainian type is formed not by the Polyan and Severians, but by the chronological Drevlian type. (See Alekseev V. P., *V poiskax predkov*. Moscow, 1972, pp. 299–300).

This cannot be regarded as a progressive development, but there is also the following view: “A feudal fragmentation took place. However, based on the principle that the greater the differentiation, the greater the historical integration, this cannot be considered a paradoxical situation”. This view is explained as follows: “Kievan Rus’ was the primary seed from which several new principalities sprouted.”⁹ Nevertheless, despite Vladimir I’s efforts to unify Russia with all his might,¹⁰ it is by no means possible to regard this fragmentation as a collapse, disintegration or regression.¹¹ It appears that Vladimir did not act ‘progressively’. For by then, ‘the united Russia of the era of Yuri Dolgoruky was merely an extension of historical tradition’¹²

No, it would appear that the chronicler living in the 13th century, whilst regarding the disintegration of Russia’s unity as a collapse, was in the right according to the 20th-century academic who wished to view everything solely as progress, even though the evidence he put forward contradicted his own conception. I do not believe it makes sense to interpret a collapse as ‘integration’.

105. Twilight

Ancient Russia was an ethno-cultural unity. However, there, for this purpose, significant ethnic processes took place within the socio-political history of the Rurikid state, which has not yet been thoroughly examined. Unfortunately, much remains unclear. In attempting to fill this gap, we must set aside certain views that are entirely unnecessary, so as not to rewrite Russian history. It is easy and straightforward to describe the process of ethnogenesis during the phase of inertia that emerged as the level of ethnic-social tension in the system steadily declined, up until the new period of intense upheaval that Old Russia underwent in the 14th century. Never mind if the style of narration is plain and concise; the idea is more important than flowery phrases.

9 Ribakov, *Kievan Rus’ and the Russian Principalities in the 12th–13th Centuries*, 1982, p.

472. The author also provides the following information: in the mid-12th century there were 15 principalities, at the beginning of the 13th century approximately 50 principalities, and in the 14th century, approximately 250 principalities. People living at that time used to say, somewhat mockingly: ‘In every village of the Rostov lands there is a principality’, ‘In Rostov, there is one soldier for every seven princes.’ (Ibid., pp. 469–470).

10 Ibid., p. 404.

11 Ibid., p. 470.

12 Ibid., p. 65.

In the 11th century, Russia had undergone a period of internal upheaval, settled accounts with the Varangians, and managed to stand on its own two feet by winning the war against the Khazars. The weakening of Russia's eastern neighbours and the remoteness of its western neighbours had reduced external conflicts to a minimum. The country's real headaches in the 12th century, and particularly in the 13th century, were the internal conflicts we now call feudal wars. Yet these were not merely feudal wars.

War is always a protracted affair; yet the revenues of the regional princes were limited. To sustain an army of fifty thousand men for an extended period required the resources of larger territories.¹³ Andrei Bogolubsky marched on Kiev in 1169 with such a force, and Mstislav of Volhynia opposed him with an equally strong army. This was a senseless and massive war in which Suzdal and the Volhynia did not participate. It is no coincidence that, in historical scholarship, the struggle between the elder and younger Monomakhs is regarded as the beginning of the division of Russia into North-Eastern and South-Western Russia. But in reality, the matter was far more complex.

A. N. Nasonoff describes 11th–12th-century Rus' as comprising the following systems in the form of 'semi-states'¹⁴: 1) the Republic of Novgorod, together with its subordinate towns; 2) the Principality of Polotsk; 3) the Principality of Smolensk; 4) the lands of Rostov-on-Suzdal; 5) the Principality of Ryazan; 6) the lands of Turov-o-Pinsk; 7) the Russian lands comprising three principalities: Kiev, Chernigov and Pereyaslav; 8) Volhynia; 9) Cherven Rus or the Principality of Galicia (merged with Volhynia in the early 13th century). To this list, one must also add the Steppe of the Kipchaks between the Don and the Carpathians, conquered by Vladimir Monomakh. Great Bulgaria, the Polovtsian lands beyond the Don, the Alan homeland in the North Caucasus, and Khazaria were situated within the borders of Russia.

Although in the 11th century the principalities conducted their military operations with their own small *druzhinas*,¹⁵ by the second half of the same century

13 Edward III landed in Normandy in 1346 with 1,000 knights, 4,000 cavalymen and 10,000 Anglo-Saxon and Welsh archers; with these forces, he won the battle that took place off the coast of Crécy. (Mauvois A. *Histoire d'Angleterre*. Paris, 1937, p. 222). Henry V, in 1415, carried out the same operation with 2,500 cavalry, 8,000 archers and 30,000 men in other services, and won the battle off Azincourt. (Ibid., p. 262). After all, these were major operations of the English monarchy.

14 Nosonov, "Russkaya Zemla" and the Formation of the Territory of the Old Russian State.

15 Svyatoslav Yaroslavich defeated a 12,000-strong Polovtsian army at Snov in 1068 with a force of just 3,000 men.

A large army was formed, which was permitted to plunder the cities conquered during the campaign. This indicates a decline in 'feudal' conflicts between the Rus' states, which in turn serves as an indication that Russia was transforming from a mono-ethnic state into a multi-ethnic one.

This integration serves as evidence of the decline of the ethnic system's fervour, which began in the mid-12th century and led to the catastrophe of the 13th century. Indeed, as the warrior spirit had been lost, it had become necessary to fill the ranks of the army with an insufficient number of soldiers drawn from the townspeople.¹⁶

If this was the case, then it was not the princes of the Rurik dynasty who waged the civil war, but rather those in their entourage who supported them and, in return, sought conflict with their neighbours. Indeed, that was the case! However, it is historically established that the princes displayed a submissive attitude not only in Novgorod and Galich, but in virtually all the semi-autonomous principalities of Old Russia. The boyars killed Andrei Bogolyubsky as a result of the servants' treachery; a mob in Kiev tore Igor Olgovich to pieces; the Smolyan people did not hand over the Rostislavichs to the enraged Kievan forces and, together with the Chernigovans, settled accounts with the 'great Russian cities' that wished to surrender to the Volhynian forces. Indeed, the chronicles also refer to this situation with the following lines: Rurik, on 2 January 1203, joined forces with the Olgovichs and "all the Polovtsians" to seize Kyiv. "Such fury swept across all the Russian lands that Kyiv had never witnessed the like. The furious crowd seized Kyiv, burning and destroying it. They seized and plundered the Cathedral of St. Sophia. They also plundered the Church of the Desyatin. They burned the monasteries and all the icons to ashes." Further on in the chronicle, it is recorded that Rurik's allies, "the Polovtsians, tore the elderly priests, monks and nuns to pieces; they took the young men, women and girls of Kyiv to their own tents."

This is, of course, a terrible thing, but who is to blame? Is it Prince Rurik Rostislavich, who granted the Polovtsians permission to plunder the city instead of paying them wages, or his muse, Vsevolod the Big Nest? Moreover, apart from the Polovtsians, the Chernigovians brought by the Olgovichs had also entered Kiev. Did they not take part in this plundering, then?!!

16 V. V. Kargalov estimates the size of the Russian army at the beginning of the 13th century to be 110,000 men. (See: *External Political Factors in the Development of Feudal Russia*. Moscow, 1967, p. 79).

What is entirely unexpected there is the formation of an anti-Kyiv coalition preparing for war through diplomatic channels, and the fact that the campaign against the Polovtsians—promising that the ‘mother of Russian cities’ would be allowed to be sacked—was organised by none other than Igor Svyatoslavich, the hero of the ‘Tale of Igor’s Campaign’ himself.¹⁷ This incident demonstrates that the ancient, traditional enmity between the Polyan and Severyan tribes—which had grown out of the rivalry between Kyiv and Chernigov—was, as early as the 13th century, strong enough to overshadow the border disputes between the Rus’ and the Polovtsians.

On the other hand, Roman Mstislavich had brought in the Torki to defend Kyiv, who fought to the death against their bitter enemies, the Polovtsians, to protect the Russian capital. This demonstrates that, although not a central state caught between the tentacles of the severe crisis caused by the bloody civil wars that did not take the form of interstate conflict between the late 12th and early 13th centuries, Russia and the conquered steppe constituted a single country.

Here, I draw upon the work of B. A. Rybakov, who interprets the texts entitled ‘The Epic of the Ruin of the Russian Lands until the Death of Grand Prince Yaroslav’ and ‘In the Days of the Christian Plague...’. According to Rybakov, this “disease” has nothing to do with either the Polovtsian threat or the Tatar invasion. On the contrary, the disease is the internal division that gnawed away at the “idyllic Russian lands” from within, leading to their ruin. The crisis had already begun in the 13th–14th centuries.

The issue of ethnic decline is a complex one. This is because contemporary historical interpretation remains at the level of the early 19th century. At that time, linear, mechanistic evolutionism prevailed across all scientific disciplines; today, however, it has been abandoned even in zoology and replaced by mutagenesis. Since the detailed course of great civilisations cannot be explained in this way, the cause of the fall of the Roman Empire, for example, has sometimes been attributed to the barbarians, sometimes to the Christians, sometimes to the slaves and slavery, but the Romans themselves have never been held responsible. Yet the Romans themselves played a part in the collapse of the Roman Empire and Roman culture; however, it is not correct to hold them entirely responsible. For a heart-diseased old man cannot be blamed for not taking up boxing or mountaineering.

By the 4th century, the Romans had forgotten how to fight and defend themselves. In this regard, Rome was sacked by the Vandals in 455

17 Ribakov B. A. *“The Tale of Igor’s Campaign” and its Contemporaries*. Moscow, 1971, pp. 288–290.

it is sufficient to recall that the Romans did not even discuss rebuilding the city or repairing the church, and indeed, they lacked the strength to do so. By 476, they had submitted to Odoacer, the commander of the Heruls, without any resistance.

The example of Rome is not the only known form of the downfall of 'civilisations'. Byzantium met its end in a valiant and tragic manner. It follows, then, that even if the form of demise is always determined by events in the distant past, it can still be chosen. Non-entropic explosions—that is, all systems arising during passionate impulses—collapse in their own distinctive manner. Having reminded the reader of this, let us return to our subject and see where the 'magnificent beauty' of Old Russia has vanished to, how this came about; and how, in its place, the young and powerful Rossya has emerged.

EXPLANATIONS OF CERTAIN TERMS AND NAMES

- Baskak:** An official who collects taxes on behalf of the Khan.
- Başın:** Captain; the person commanding a unit of one hundred men.
- Bilina:** A Russian epic.
- Bitikei:** Tax collector.
- Bogatır:** Hero, warrior.
- Boyar:** Large landowners; landlords. **Grand Prince:** Emir-i kelân; emîr el-ümerâ. **Çelad** or **cholop:** The name given to serfs.
- D'yak:** (Secretary), assistant to the voivode.
- Daruga:** Tax collector.
- Drujina:** Military unit.
- Dvoryans:** The corps of nobles near Moscow; the zâdegân contingent.
- Grid:** A person of higher rank than a drujina. A title given to the Prince's men.
- Grivna:** A coin weighing 500 grams of silver.
- Haydamaks:** Bands of outlaws.
- Izgoy:** A person who has lost their rights within society.
- Kniaz:** (Knez, knyaz): Prince; emir; prince.
- Principality:** A principality or emirate.
- Colleges:** Institutions founded by Peter the Great.
- Kudesnik:** A seer who foretells the future.
- Kuni:** The first Russian currency.
- Ludi:** Peasants who had lost their freedom.
- Lüybeç** (Lùbeç): A meeting of princes.
- Mamayevo Poboışçe:** The epic of the Battle of Mamay.
- Maslenitsa:** Apukurya; the slaughter of animals; a festival celebrated by the ancient Russians during the pagan era.
- Mestniçestvo:** The system of ranks and positions.
- Oprichnik:** A member of Tsar Ivan's retinue.
- Oprichnina:** Towns and cities set aside to cover the expenses of Tsar Ivan's court and retinue.

Perun: The sky god in ancient Russia.

Pogrom: Massacre; riot. **Polotskans:**

An Eastern Slavic tribe. **Polans:** An

Eastern Slavic tribe. **Pomeščik:**

Landowner.

Pravda: Russian law.

Rusiçi: An older form of the name 'Rus'.

Smerd: A peasant of the middle class.

Svod: A summary of the laws.

Tisyatskiy: A person who administered the city alongside the prince; a major.

Tiyun (tivun): A title given to the prince's men. (Tudun).

Tômnik: Commander of a regiment.

Uškuynik: Boyar regiment.

Ūlūš: The fief granted to the knaz; a fiefdom. (Udel).

Vareg (Varyag): Norman; mercenary.

Veče: A meeting of the tribal elders.

Vichod (Tiş): Tax

Virnik: A person in the prince's retinue.

Virvi (very): The name of a village belonging to the middle class.

Volhov: In the pagan era before the Russians converted to Christianity, a semi-ascetic, dervish-like sorcerer.

Volostel: District administrator.

Votchina: Hereditary estate.

Votchinnik: Patrimonial estate.

Yabetnik: A rank of a person in the prince's retinue.

Yam: (Postal) service.

Yasaçnı: Those liable to pay the yasak (tax).

Zemski Sobor: Council of Provincial Deputies.

Important Note: In Russian, the suffixes indicating affiliation do not correspond to those in Turkish. They resemble the Arabic nisbah (ya'sina). The suffix (–**skiy/ski**) added to place names signifies '–li; –lı'. For example: **Volinskiy** (from **Volın**); **Moskovskiy** (from **Moscow**), etc. There are also suffixes indicating lineage. As these appear frequently in the book, they may lead to the same person being perceived as different individuals. For example: **Mstislavič** (son of **Mistislav**); **Olgovič** (son of **Oleg**); Izjaslav **Mstislavič Černigovskij** (Izjaslav, son of **Vladimir of Černigov**), etc.

INDEX

1. ETHNONYMS

(Tribes, Clans, Dynasties, Kingdoms, Sects, Political Movements and Religions)

Important Note: In compiling this index, particular attention has been paid to the different variants or names of a specific tribe, dynasty, or religious or political movement. For example, the ethnonym 'Kipchak' is known as 'Kipchak' in Central Asia, 'Polovtsians' in Russia, and 'Cumans' in Western literature. If the author has used different names on different pages, in this case one could say 'Kipchaks, see Polovtsians; Polovtsians, see Kipchaks'; however, suppose the author has used only the term 'Polovtsians' throughout twenty pages; in this case, if a cross-reference such as 'Polovtsians, see Kipchaks' were provided, the researcher-reader would limit themselves to the pages where the term 'Kipchaks' appears and would thus be deprived of that information. For this reason, each ethnonym has been used separately, but synonyms have been provided in brackets.

Furthermore, as they appear very frequently, the Russian, Ross, Russia, Rossya and Slavic proper nouns have not been included in this index.

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